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The Religious Experience of Sexual Minority Youth: Identity, Integration and Minority Stress

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THE RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE OF SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH:

IDENTITY, INTEGRATION, AND MINORITY STRESS

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ABSTRACT

Recent researchers have highlighted the need to consider the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) individual's experience in various social contexts. Only a few studies have examined LGBTQ adolescent and young adult religious experiences. In the current study, 106 LGBTQ late adolescents and young adults (18-24 years) were surveyed to gain a better understanding of LGBTQ religious experience, identity integration, and the relationship between LGBTQ religiosity and psychosocial outcomes. A multidimensional understanding of LGBTQ religious experiences is presented; participants exhibited a propensity to disidentify with religion and reported religious and sexual identity conflict. While participants did not report a high degree of religious and sexual identity integration, factors related to successful identity integration are presented. Finally, levels of reported depressive symptoms, self-esteem, and minority stress are discussed with suggestions for future research.

(157 pages)

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a time characterized by many developmental changes and challenges, occurring between childhood and adulthood. During this time, youth experience major physical, social, cognitivev and psychological changes. Amidst this transition, adolescents continue to define their own self-concept through increased emotional independence, as well as increasing autonomy in decisions regarding sexual behavior, career choice, schooling, values, friendshipsv and more (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). Each of these choices relates to the key task of adolescence; the formation of identity (Erikson, 1968). Adolescents find themselves amid a great challenge, caught between the desire to assume appropriate roles in hopes of being integrated into society and maintaining their individuality or self-hood (Coleman & Henry). For some youth, the tension of adolescence is magnified by an additional set of challenges as they work to create a positive same-sex attracted identity amidst a heterosexist culture (D'Augelli, 1998; Garnets & Kimmel, 1993).

To understand the unique challenges some same-sex attracted youth face, theorists, and researchers have developed theories to conceptualize the "coming out" process. Contemporary researchers suggest sexual identity development is a fluid process, gaining meaning within specific contexts and cultures (Gagnon, 2004; Garnets & Kimmel, 1993; Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001; Laumann, Gagnon, Michael, &

Michaels, 1994). Thus, the same-sex attracted youth's experience of development during the adolescent years is individual and unique, shaped by a myriad of contextual variables (Diamond & Savin-Williams, 2000; Rust, 1993; Savin-Williams & Diamond, 2000). Despite the powerful, defining influence of these contextual variables, little research has been done to fully understand the experience of the sexual minority adolescent in different contexts. D'Augelli (2006) called for researchers to gain a wider understanding of these "crucial contexts" when considering the experience of sexual minority adolescents.

The religious context is a major influence in the lives of both youth and adults. According to Rosario, Yali, Hunter, and Gwadz (2006), 60% of youth and 90% of adults say religion is an important facet in their lives. However, little research has considered the sexual minority adolescent experience of religion. While numerous studies have considered the way religion serves as a protective factor for adolescents as a whole (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Dullin, Hill, & Ellingson, 2006; Dunn, 2005; Nooney, 2005; Thornton & Camburn, 1989; Wallace & Foreman, 1998), all but two of these studies failed to account for the sexual orientation of the adolescents studied (Rosario et al.; Rostosky, Danner, & Riggle, 2007). As a result, research has found that, while religion serves as a protective factor for heterosexual youth, such a relationship is not supported with same-sex attracted youth. Rosario and colleagues claimed that an understanding of the interaction of the sexual minority adolescent experience and the religious context is

vital to the discussion of religion's protective influence for all adolescents. Secondly, Rosario and colleagues called for a more in-depth understanding of the integration of religious and sexual identities. Finally, Rostosky and colleagues directed further research to consider the interaction of the religious experience and minority stress and/or psychosocial outcomes by using a multidimensional measure of religiosity. With such research, scholarship may develop a better appreciation of the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience within the religious context.

The purpose of this study is to gain a wider understanding of the experience of the sexual minority adolescent and young adult in the religious context. Although there are numerous ways to conceptualize the experience of religion for the same-sex attracted individual, this study will use a multidimensional measure of religiosity to assess and conceptualize the religious experiences of sexual minority adolescents and young adults, methods of integrating one's religious and sexual identities, the associations between religiosity, demographic, and sexual identity information; reported minority stress; and psychosocial outcomes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This review of the literature is divided into four sections and provides: (a) a review of the history and current perspective of same-sex attractions and behaviors, (b) an overview of theories of sexuality and related identity development models, (c) an examination of religion and adolescence, and (d) the rationale and objectives for the current study.

Same-Sex Attraction and Behavior

Historical Perspective

Same-sex attractions and sexual behaviors have long been documented as a consistent and "normal feature of the human condition" (Naphy, 2004, p. 266). However, societal values and attitudes towards same-sex behavior have fluctuated. During pre-Christian times, prior to Mosaic Law, there was very little societal or religious distress regarding same-sex sexual behavior. In fact, Naphy described the world of god and goddess worship in which bisexuality was the norm. During this time, homosexuality was not stigmatized or constrained, nor did it have to be hidden (Greenberg, 1988). Rather, sexual choice was bound by two separate constructs, procreation, and love. With the exception of the need for procreation, partner gender was of little concern.

Starting around 2000 BCE, the rise of Judaism facilitated a new social construct for sex. Gender of individuals became important, and the sole purpose of sex was defined

as procreation. According to Jewish teachings, it was now "detestable" for a man to lie with a man as he does a woman (Leviticus 18:22, New International Version). Naphy (2004) asserted that while Judaism was establishing its roots, both the Eastern Mediterranean and Chinese societies defined same-sex behavior differently. Love and marriage were conceptualized as two separate institutions; marriage served the purpose of procreation, whereas love had no boundaries. With obligation to procreate fulfilled, same-sex relations were allowable within these cultures (Naphy). Each social context developed its own construct for same-sex behavior. Recent biblical scholars have suggested the Judaic laws prohibiting same-sex behavior addressed a specific social problem, gang rape. They have asserted these laws were not intended as a widespread prohibition of same-sex behavior (Gomes, 2002). Despite this claim, the Judeo-Christian ideals of sexuality spread quickly and became the new world reality throughout the following 4,000 years.

Thus, prior to 2000 BCE, most cultures and societies viewed same-sex attraction as a normal part of the human condition; yet in the Judeo-Christian tradition, same-sex sexual behavior was construed as abhorrent. Naphy (2004), concluding a study of the history of same-sex attractions, stated, "in the context of human history and culture, it is the (Judeo)-Christian response to homosexuality that is abnormal and unnatural" (p. 269). Recently, there is some evidence of a slow transition in some of the traditional barriers to same-sex attraction and behavior within the Judeo-Christian tradition. No longer do all denominations or subgroups within the Christian tradition construct same-sex sexual behavior as abnormal or wrong. Diamond (2005) reported society is slowly changing, increasing both the visibility and reception of same-sex attractions and sexual behaviors

over the last 30 years. From being previously considered a normal facet of the human condition, to assertions of sinfulness, it seems that slowly, society is inching back to an understanding of same-sex sexual behavior as simply a variation of ordinary sexual expression.

Defining Terms

Although same-sex attraction and behavior have existed for as long as human history has been documented, terms to define one's sexual orientation have shifted throughout time. The term "homosexual" originated in the 19th century to medically define same-sex behavior as abnormal and insufficient, while designating "heterosexual" as normal (Bernal & Coolhart, 2005). Near the end of the 20th century, the term "gay" was preferred, linked to celebratory gay pride movements and a tone of self-respect. However, this term was imperfect as it failed to recognize the sexuality of women, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals (Bernal & Coolhart). As a result, many used the acronym "LGBTQ" (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transfender, and queer) to define those with same-sex attractions. Yet again, this term is insufficient as many people choose not to self-label or feel the fluidity of their sexual attractions does not easily compartmentalize into a single expression (Bernal & Coolhart; Diamond, 2005). More recently, the term "sexual minority" defines people with same-sex attractions, identity and/or behavior; admittedly, inherent problems exist with this term as well.

Today, the term "sexual minority youth" generally refers to those adolescents who identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGB). However, Savin-Williams (1990) noted that self-identification does not adequately represent those who have same-sex attractions

and/or engage in same-sex behaviors. Depending on the study, researchers tend to examine three different variables to define and study this population. First, sexual attraction (sexual orientation) includes one's attractions and feelings towards a member of the same-sex. Sexual behavior, engaging in sexual activity with members of the same sex, is the second method of identification. However, the majority of youth encapsulated by these first two categories, attracted to the same-sex or engaging in same-sex behavior, do not ever identify with a traditional sexual minority label (e.g., gay/lesbian or bisexual; Laumann et al., 1994). Third, sexual identity is the self-labeling of gay, lesbian, bisexual or use of another label that has personal meaning. The following review of the literature encompasses studies that have defined sexual minorities in these diverse ways.

Sexual Minority Adolescents

With such varied definitions, prevalence rates of same-sex attraction and/or labeling are difficult to ascertain. Anhalt and Morris (1998) claimed prevalence rates vary between 2.6-17% depending on sample definitions and gender. Satterly and Dyson (2005) suggested more conservative numbers, asserting between 3 and 6% of adolescents self-identify as a sexual minority or indicate a same-sex or both-sex attraction. Williams, Connolly, Pepler, and Craig (2005) separated the variables, stating 1-3% of youth self-identify as part of the sexual minority and up to 10% are questioning. After reviewing several studies regarding the prevalence of LGB self-labeling, attraction and behavior, Savin-Williams (2005) concluded between 15-20% of adolescents have some degree of same-sex orientation (sexual attraction) with less than half of those being exclusively same-sex oriented. The numbers of youth who report same-sex attraction outnumber the

3-4 % who either self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual, or report same-sex activities.

Amidst this complexity, researchers have attempted to identify and study sexual minority youth since the 1970s. According to Savin-Williams (2005) sexual minority adolescents were labeled in a category, different from normal, during the 1970s and 80s. At this time, research focused on same-sex attracted youth as troubled and distraught, at risk for dysfunction. This established an understanding of the sexual minority adolescent as suicidal and plagued by a myriad of negative risk factors in the 80s and 90s (Savin-Williams). As a result, scholarship focused on these risks and the sexual minority adolescent's need for guidance. During the start of the 21st century, the notion of gay teens being resilient, and an interest in understanding normative, typical development among sexual minority youths began to seep into contemporary research. In an optimistic prediction of the future, Savin-Williams expressed hope that the label "gay" will cease to exist, and teens with same-sex attraction will be viewed as typically developing adolescents.

This historical perspective, understanding of the history of same-sex desires and overview of research sets the stage for a discussion of the major theories for understanding sexuality. Traditionally, research regarding sexual minority youth has stemmed from one of two major theories and related models of same-sex behavior: essentialism and social constructionism.

Theories and Models of Sexuality Development

Essentialism

Traditionally, scholars have drawn from essentialist theory to understand one's

sexual orientation as innate and biologically determined. Essentialist scholars view sexual orientation through an understanding of individual essences or true forms. These forms are constant, not changing (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). In terms of sexual preference, the two forms are homosexuality and heterosexuality. These essences represent two different categories, which are constant and do not shift over time. For essentialist scholars, one's sexual orientation is a permanent and essential aspect of one's being. Traditional essentialist theorists developed linear stage models to understand the development of sexual identity. In such, one "achieves" a same-sex attracted identity through a series of stages, acknowledging one's "true" sexual orientation (Cass, 1984; Plummer, 1975; Troiden, 1979). While essentialist theory offers an early theoretical backdrop, recent scholars tend to use social constructionist theory to understand the development of sexual orientation.

Social Constructionism

Social constructionism offers a reconsideration of theoretical beliefs, asserting same-sex attractions and sexual behavior are defined within both culture and time (Richardson, 1993). Support for this theory quickly emerges, resulting from a historical review of same-sex attraction, behavior, and labeling. Furthermore, research evidence suggests individuals' definitions of their own sexuality lie within their unique experiences. When examining the lives of 346 lesbian-identified and 60 bisexual-identified women, Rust found fluidity in identity processes, variation, and change to be the norm. In fact, Rust (1993) stated,

> Self-identity is the result of the interpretation of personal experience in terms of available social constructs. Identity is therefore a reflection of

> sociopolitical organization rather than a reflection of essential organization, and coming out is the process of describing oneself in terms of social constructs rather than the process of discovering one's essences. (p. 44)

As a result, many contemporary researchers tend to rely on Berger and Luckmann's (1966) social constructionist theory. Five central tenants outline social constructionist theory (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998). First, we experience the world as structured and ordered. Secondly, language helps us make sense of both worldly chaos and order. Third, the experience of reality is a shared phenomenon, characterized and related through the use of language. Fourth, these shared experiences are habitual and institutionalized. Finally, such shared experiences carry meaning within particular societies and groups.

In terms of sexual orientation, though researchers recognize biological drives may fuel one's sexuality, actual behavior, identification and labeling exist within the societal, cultural and time frameworks of the individual. Weeks (1986) expanded on this,

> It [sexuality] is a result of diverse social practices that give meaning to human activities, of social definitions and self-definitions, of struggles between those who have power to define and regulate, and those who resist. Sexuality is not a given, it is a product of negotiation, struggle and human agency. (p. 25)

The reality and experience of sexuality, labeling, and stigmas, is a social construction. Plummer (1975), an early proponent of social constructionism, stated it well, "nothing is sexual but naming makes it so. Sexuality is a social construction learnt in interaction with others" (p. 30). Both Berger and Luckmann's (1966) theory and Plummer's (1975) assertion are supported with reflection on the varying terms to define same-sex behavior across time and the existence of same-sex sexual relations during the pre-Judaic era.

Thus, sexuality becomes a facet of the particular society in which the individual resides.

In the process of making labels and their meanings, both attractions and behaviors become culturally centric phenomena that are ongoing and dynamic. Several examples emerge when considering contemporary society. For instance, homosexuality was considered a sexual disorder according to the American Psychiatric Association as stated in the DSM I and DSM II (APA, 1952, 1968). Since 1973, homosexuality is no longer considered a disorder, and though someone may have same-sex attraction or engage in same-sex behavior, it no longer represents symptoms of a psychological illness (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001). Thus, the understanding of homosexuality shifted amidst the sociocultural framework. The association of the term illness with the practice of same-sex sexual behavior was bound by both culture and time.

Similarly, recent studies have shown that same-sex attractions and sexual behavior are not critical characteristics for categorization in certain cultures and across specific time periods. For example, Anhalt and Morris (1998) reported that some non-Western societies do not define sexual behavior across homosexual and heterosexual lines and Naphy (2004) outlined the existence of same-sex sexual behavior without categorization since pre-Christian times. Furthermore, Weeks (1986) reported on forms of institutionalized same-sex sexual activity in pubertal activities in African tribes and historical traditions of same-sex behavior between those living in ancient Greece and early America. In fact, though same-sex sexual behavior has existed across time, it is only since the 1850s that labels of "heterosexual," "lesbian," and "gay" have been used. Certainly, each of the aforementioned authors offered further indication of the cultural implications of naming same-sex behavior.

An additional development within research supporting a social constructionist model is the process by which individuals come to label themselves (Richardson, 1993). Research suggests that the steps of self-identification are more fluid than that described by traditional identity development models. During this process, some individuals maintain a gay, lesbian, or bisexual identity and others do not, challenging the notion of a fixed identity and essentialism. For example, in a recent study, Diamond (2006) found that 70% of women changed their identity label at least once since first identifying as lesbian or bisexual. From this study, Diamond highlighted one woman's experience of her own sexuality.

> For those of us who question, your whole life becomes a question. Do you then reach some level of understanding, and then it's static. I don't think so. When I'm with a woman, I'm not really a lesbian, and when I'm with a man I'm not really straight. Maybe if I spent ten years with a woman it would change the way I thought, and I would call myself a lesbian. I think your definition changes based on your experiences. I can't really say. I still feel young; I still feel that I have a lot left to learn. (p. 89)

Certainly, this statement highlights the fluctuations in attractions, offering further support to social constructionist theories and models of same-sex sexual behavior. Similarly, in a 1993 study, Stokes, McKirnan, and Burzette found that 41% of men who labeled as bisexual changed their self-label 1 year later to homosexual. Rust (1993) reported similar findings, saying that "variation and change are the norm" within the self-identification process (p. 44). As noted, for some individuals, sexuality continues to change after reaching the initial self-labeling "stage," further challenging the notions of both essentialism and linear stage models. Instead of being resistant to cultural

influences, as essentialists may hold, one's sexuality, including his or her sexual orientation, is molded, shaped, and created within the culture.

Models of Sexual Identity Development

Frameworks for considering sexual minority identity development have arisen from social constructionist theorists that attempt to recognize the wide variability of the individual's experience of identity formation. These conceptualizations have recognized while many individuals likely experience similar stages, self-awareness, self-labeling, and disclosure to friends and family, the process of these events may not be ordered as stringently nor need occur in every situation. Instead, recent researchers have focused on the importance of various constructs within the developmental process rather than a linear "stage" perspective (Horowitz & Newcomb, 2001). As a result, recent scholars suggest the process of self-identification may not be as linear as suggested by the previously discussed stage models (Coleman & Hendry, 1999). Rather, sexual identity development is a fluid process by which the individual revisits various phases and stages until an identity is achieved.

Taking this critique one step further, Savin-Williams (2005) described all identity models as "seduced by the intuitive appeal of conceiving of development as a simple, lockstep formulation" (p. 70). In addition, he claimed that "the concept of separate stages inherently places brackets around something that cannot be bracketed" (p. 81). Put simply, the diversity of human individuals and their sexual development cannot be condensed to a small number of simple steps. Secondly, regardless of attempts to be inclusive, these models still assume a heterosexual or homosexual trajectory. If models

still result in one identity over another, Savin-Williams asked how one "deals" with the heterosexual youth who are questioning? Where do they fit in to the linear identity development models? Overall, such models are inadequate attempts to define and characterize sexual minority identity formation while appreciating individual, diverse experiences. As a result, Savin-Williams proposed a new perspective for considering the entire sexual minority adolescent experience.

Differential Developmental Trajectories Framework

Savin-Williams (2005) suggested a differential developmental trajectories framework for understanding the sexual minority adolescent experience, admitting that it would be "irresponsible to propose a comprehensive theory" (p. 82). Within the title lies the meaning: differential indicates that there is variability between individuals; developmental recognizes the regular developmental steps that occur throughout life; and trajectories relate to the many paths that an individual might experience. There are four facets to this framework that are validated by current research, something that past identity models have been unable to achieve.

Savin-Williams (2005) described the first tenet as being one of similarities. Adolescents who have same-sex attractions experience many of the same developmental processes that heterosexual youth experience. Adolescents, regardless of sexual attraction, behavior or label, experience similar pressures, biological changes, ethical questions, and social experiences. To ignore the reality that same-sex attracted adolescents are similar in many ways to their other-sex attracted peers puts a researcher at risk of attributing risk factors that may be part of normative development for all

adolescents to only same-sex attracted adolescents. This is consistent with previous work by Diamond and Savin-Williams (2000). In a study of 167 adolescent and young-adult sexual minority women, they found sexual fluidity and nonexclusivity blurs across heterosexual, bisexual, and lesbian females. Divisions based on sexual identity were futile. Rather, similarities were found to exist across categories created by sexual labels. Savin-Williams and Diamond found sexual minority youth had more in common with their heterosexual peers of the same sex than sexual minority youth of the opposite sex. Females, regardless of sexual identity, were found to be more like females. Rather than focusing on sexual minority adolescents alone, these authors challenge future researchers to study all adolescents, noting both the similarities and differences in adolescent sexuality.

The second tenet to the differential developmental trajectories framework relates to the dissimilarities that have been magnified throughout the history of research with sexual minority youth. Despite their similarities, it is true that same-sex attracted youth are different from heterosexual youth in some important ways. First, biological differences have been noted in research. Savin-Williams (2005) acknowledged these differences while reminding the reader that biologically, there are more similarities between same-sex attracted youth and other-sex attracted youth. Secondly, same-sex attracted youth experience some differentiation in socialization. In a society that is predominantly heterosexist, same-sex attracted youth experience school, social, religious, and family pressures that are unique, relative to heterosexual youths.

Earlier research by Coleman and Hendry (1999) is consistent with the differential socialization argument, suggesting it is not the identity itself that causes difficulty, but

the situations in which the individual adolescents find themselves. Because an exhaustive study of the differences in socialization between sexual minority youth and those who label as heterosexual is beyond the scope of this review, only three examples will be considered here. The first of these involves the process of disclosure. Certainly the "coming out" process is unique to youth who intend to self-label as part of the sexual minority. Our culture presupposes a heterosexual identity, and thus the process of disclosure to family and friends can be wrought with fear and frustration, especially at a time when adolescents are working to increase self-acceptance (Anhalt & Morris, 1998). Secondly, Williams and colleagues (2005) reported both increased levels of depression and externalizing behaviors for sexual minority adolescents, relative to heterosexual youth. When researching specific risk factors, the authors concluded that this association was more highly correlated with experiences of victimization and lack of social support than sexual orientation alone. This study offered further support for differences in socialization experiences, unique to sexual minority youth. Finally, Galliher, Rostosky and Hughes (2004) explored psychosocial adjustment as related to sexual attraction status, biological sex, and urbanicity. Overall, same-sex and both-sex attracted youth experienced lower self-rated levels of school belonging and self-esteem than opposite-sex attracted youth. By looking closer at this study, the results not only offer support for the second tenet of Savin-Williams (2005) framework, they give evidence for the third proposition as well.

The third aspect of the differential developmental trajectories framework states that there is a great degree of variation within the population of sexual minority youth. Gender, ethnicity, individual personality characteristics, and life experiences are only

some of the different factors that influence the individual nature of the sexual minority youth's experience (Savin-Williams, 2005). For example, some black gay men prefer to construct their identity around their racial identification rather than sexual identification, due to a higher need of support around the matter of race (Coyle, 1998). In the Galliher and colleagues' (2004) study, differences were found across lines of both self-identification and gender in relation to the school belonging, depression, and self-esteem variables. For example, female youth who reported both-sex attractions scored lowest on school belonging, whereas same-sex attracted males scored lower than those with either both or opposite-sex attractions. This study found further differences based on the community in which they lived; urban, suburban, or rural contexts. Urbanicity and gender both were found to be influential variables in the rate of depression symptoms for sexual minority youth, but not for youth who reported only opposite-sex attractions. In addition, gender differences in the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience were reported by Savin-Williams and Diamond (2000), as well as Diamond and Savin-Williams (2000).

Bernal and Coolhart (2005) examined this variation further in their study of the coming out process of adolescents. Specifically, they outlined the individual trajectories of those youth who adapt and self-identify successfully within a heterosexist environment. The authors pointed towards four characteristics that differentiate those who positively self-identify from those who struggle within the process. First, youth who are most adaptive in the coming out process had a very solid sense of sexual identity. Secondly, these youth often had a heightened sense of self-esteem. Third, resilient youth differentiated between their own feelings of pride and sense of self and others' negative

reactions. Finally, these youth internalized positive affirmations about themselves rather than homophobic messages. According to Bernal and Coolhart, many of the processes that differentiate adaptive identity development from that which is less successful are inherent within the individual relational structures, further supporting the third tenet of the differential developmental trajectories framework.

The fourth tenet of the differential developmental trajectories framework insists on the uniqueness of the individual experience. Each person's individual trajectory is incomparable and unmatched to any other person's experience (Savin-Williams, 2005). From a research perspective, such consideration on an individual level is too complex. However, the understanding of the fourth tenet is important for research and the respect of the individual youth participants in future studies. Overall, an understanding of the differential developmental trajectories framework is vital for future research with sexual minority youth.

Key considerations for research materialize from these theoretical and developmental models. From a social constructionist perspective, social context matters. The second tenet of the developmental trajectories framework stresses the uniqueness of same-sex attracted youth, relative to heterosexual youth, due in part to socialization. The third and fourth tenets also point toward the individual experience, upon which one's self-identity is shaped and molded. Rust (1993) emphasized this, stating that self-identity "is the result of the interpretation of personal experience in terms of available social constructs" (p. 44). Despite the importance of social context, D'Augelli (2006) asserted that recent scholarship still does not have a good understanding of the social contexts influencing adolescent sexual minority development. In fact, he called for researchers to

gain a wider understanding of these "crucial contexts" of development. One of these crucial contexts and a major socializing force within America is religion.

Religion and Adolescence

In conjunction with the 2000 United States Census, the American Religious Identification Survey used random telephone sampling of 50,281 residential households in 2001 to gain information on religious affiliation. According to the survey, 77% of Americans reported Christian affiliation, 4% identified with other world religions such as Buddhism, Judaism, and Islam, while 14% described themselves as atheist. Approximately 5% of those surveyed refused to respond to questions regarding their religion (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2007). Within the Christian tradition, nearly 31% of Americans identified as Roman Catholic, 21% as Baptist, 9% Methodist, with the remaining 39% identifying in smaller increments as Lutheran, Presbyterian, Latter-day Saints (LDS), and other Christian denominations.

In the United States, the majority of adolescents report religion as a major influence in their lives. In fact, Rosario and colleagues (2006) stated nearly 60% of youth said religion was an important facet in their lives. Further, 90% of adults said religion was important, and 96% of adults said they believe in God. A study by Wallace, Forman, Caldwell, and Willis (2003) found 60% of 8th, 10th, and 12th graders felt that religion was an important part of their life and 50% attended services regularly. Wallace and Foreman (1998) stated nearly 95% of youth ages 13-17 believe in God. As a result,

the social context of religion emerges as an important milieu for adolescent sexual development.

Rostosky and colleagues (2007) stated, "because the majority of youth in the United States claim a religious affiliation and approximately 50% regularly participate in religious organizations or activities, religiosity is likely to be an influential context for sexual identity development" (p. 441). Coyle (1998) suggested the task of reconciling one's religious and sexual identities further complicates the identity development process. Though religious contexts may complicate the coming out process, some youth successfully develop a positive religious identity amidst same-sex attraction. In fact, Konik and Stewart (2004) found that same-sex attracted individuals were at an advantage, scoring higher on an identity achievement measure than heterosexuals. Same-sex attracted individuals are forced to question and analyze their own identity in a variety of social milieus in the overarching context of a primarily heterosexist society. Despite the prominent role religion may play in the lives of sexual minority adolescents, current research offers little understanding of the sexual minority adolescent religious experience, participation and affiliation.

Defining Religion

One of the complex and foundational tasks to researching adolescent religious contexts is that of defining and conceptualizing religion. The act of defining or operationalizing religion without reducing its richness or complexity is a formidable task. As a result, Peet (2005) stated, "religion to date has eluded adequate definition" (p. 105). In measuring and defining the term religion, one attempts to put limitations on a

construct founded in both omniscience and mystery. Moberg (2002) asserted that we have just begun the search for a universal measure of religiosity and spirituality. He stated this task may be "as elusive as capturing the mythical pot of gold at the foot of the rainbow" (p. 58). Though seemingly futile, the search for defining variables will give way to a deeper understanding of not only religion, but humanity's propensity towards and interaction with the holy and/or spiritual.

Fundamentally, religion embodies a search for the sacred. From a broad perspective, religion is delineated on both individual and communal levels. These two levels of conceptualizing religion serve as pathways to understanding what is meant by "holy." In fact, Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) stated, "the primary mission of organized religion is the individual and communal search for the sacred" (p. 36). The communal nature of religion includes those aspects related to the religious community: faith practices, religious services, and denominational theological beliefs. The communal aspect of religion is most often associated with religious practices and serves as a major socializing force for the religious community (Corveleyn & Luyten, 2005). The individual nature of religion is that "as it is lived, made up of a mix of these theological principles with psychological (personal) and sociological influences.... Personal religion is thus colored by one's own personal, idiosyncratic history" (p. 81).

According to Hoffman, Knight, Boscoe-Huffman, and Stewart (2006), there are cognitive, behavioral, and affective dimensions to the religious experience. The religious experience manifests in each of these ways, both individually and communally. Communally, the cognitive dimension may include the church-wide denominational teachings on life, God, and afterlife. Thornton and Camburn (1989) targeted the

communal cognitive dimension when they included religious denomination preference and teachings in their study of religious involvement and adolescent sexuality. Individually, this dimension includes one's set of beliefs, God-image, and personal understanding of afterlife.

Behaviorally, the religious experience is often measured from the communal perspective. Rostosky and colleagues (2007) considered frequency of religious service or youth group attendance over the previous 12 months in a study looking at religious protective factors for lesbian, gay, and bisexual youth. Nooney (2005) also tapped into the behavioral domain from a communal perspective when she measured frequency of church attendance. From an individual perspective, Nooney measured this aspect of religion by polling personal prayer practices. Behaviorally, the individual nature of religion is also assessed in the reading of religious texts and personal engagement in religious rituals. Finally, emotions experienced both within individual and communal experiences offer an understanding of the affective domain. This domain is measured primarily by self-reports of these emotional religious experiences.

Researchers are encouraged to consider the cognitive, behavioral, and affective aspects of both the communal and individual dimensions of religion. In addition, religion manifests itself differently intertwined within specific cultural contexts and practices. Zinnbauer and Pargament (2005) stated, "context must be accounted for when studying the religiousness or spirituality of individuals or groups" (p. 38). Consequently, when attempting to study the religious experience, one must be sensitive to both cultural and religious denominational differences as well as the communal and individual domains of the religious experience. As a result, Rostosky and colleagues (2007) called for a

multidimensional understanding of religion, capturing many different variables, both communal and individual, of the religious experience.

Religious Comfort and Religious Strain

One way to conceptualize the religious experience is to consider the degree of religious comfort and religious strain associated with the individual's experience. Exline and Rose (2005) suggested that, though many researchers have measured perceived guidance, positive emotion and comfort in connection with religion, both distress and religious strain must also be measured to fully understand the religious experience. Religious comfort includes many commonly assessed religious factors: spiritual direction, positive coping styles, perceived blessings, positive mental health, and feelings of social connectedness. Religious strain includes the struggles and hardships surrounding one's religious beliefs and activities. Exline and Rose outlined four "types" of religious struggle, including "suffering, virtuous striving, perception of supernatural evil and social strain" (p. 316).

The authors suggested the strain of suffering includes questioning and anger towards God, feelings many individuals experience when suffering. For example, many people ask "why God?" and may feel angry with God when faced with a traumatic death of a loved one. Secondly, Exline and Rose (2005) stated traditional religious bodies have outlined rules regarding sexual behavior, drug and/or alcohol consumption, and other policies to obey. As a result, they suggested some individuals experience religious conflict as they strive to live within the guidelines of such "virtuous" behavior. The third type of religious struggle includes conflicts with "forces such as Satan, demons or evil

spirits," consistent with many theological teachings (Exline & Rose, p. 322). Finally, religious-induced social strain includes struggles with members of the religious community. Conflict may arise between one's relationship and belief in God and that with the religious community. For the current study, a consideration of both religious comfort and strain was vital to understanding the individual and often complicated religious experience of sexual minority adolescents.

Religion as a Protective Factor

Historically, the early Freudian view of religion asserted that religion encouraged neurotic defenses, and fostered depression, low self-esteem and schizophrenia (Ano & Vasconcelles, 2005; Koenig & Larson, 2001). However, not all early views of religiosity were so pessimistic. In 1933, Carl Jung wrote about the ability of religion to encourage emotional stability:

> During the past thirty years, people from all the civilized countries of the earth have consulted me. I have treated many hundreds of patients, the larger number being Protestants, a smaller number being Jews, and not more than five or six believing Catholics. Among all my patients in the second half of life- that is to say, over 35- there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost that which the living religions of every age have given to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. (p. 229)

Recent scholarship seems to reflect Jung's statement, relating religious involvement with increased well-being and self-esteem, greater social support, and less substance use, anxiety, or depression. The shared values, beliefs, and attitudes within the religious context have power, guiding both behavior and language (Rosario et al., 2006). In general, religious youth are less likely to engage in suicidal ideation, alcohol or drug

abuse, and engage in fewer sexual risk behaviors than youth who are not affiliated with religion. Rather, they often conduct themselves in ways that enhance both their health and self-esteem (Rosario et al.; Wallace & Foreman, 1998).

In an analysis of the ADD Health data, Nooney (2005) documented the role of religious involvement in adolescent mental health. Nooney defined religious involvement by frequency of both church attendance and prayer, as well as importance of religion. The author found by enhancing social relationships, religious involvement was associated with a decrease in both adolescent self-reported depression and suicidal ideation. In their chapter *Relationships of Religiosity and Spirituality with Mental Health and Psychopathology,* Miller and Kelley (2005) discussed both positive and negative associations of religiosity and mental health. Overall, the authors highlighted the importance of both individual religious beliefs and cultural assumptions when considering the impact of religiosity on mental health. The interaction between individual religious affiliation and belief structure with cultural implications of both mental distress and religiosity ultimately shapes the psychological adjustment of the individual.

Ano and Vasconcelles (2005) found mixed results regarding religiosity and its influence on stress when they completed a meta-analysis of 49 studies. Specifically, they considered positive and negative religious coping styles and levels of psychological adjustment. Religious coping refers to both cognitive and behavioral techniques grounded in the particular religious tradition. Positive coping strategies included forgiveness, conversion, support from clergy, and the presence of religious boundaries. Negative coping styles included attributions of demonic possession and/or punishing God, passive religiosity, and pleading for direct intercession. Adjustment to stress was

divided into two categories: positive and negative. Positive psychological adjustment was indicated by optimism, acceptance, emotional well-being, self-esteem, happiness, hope, and increased life satisfaction. Negative psychological adjustment included increased levels of anxiety, guilt, hopelessness, hostility, mood disturbance, social dysfunction, and mood disturbance. Ano and Vasconcelles found positive psychological adjustment for those who engaged in primarily positive religious coping and negative psychological adjustment for those who relied on negative coping mechanisms.

Research on adolescent substance use also suggests that religion plays a protective role with regard to alcohol abuse, and marijuana or nicotine use (Dunn, 2005; Rostosky et al., 2007). In a Utah-based study on the influences of faith and social support on alcohol abuse, the majority of the participants reported an affiliation with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS) church (Dullin et al., 2006). The authors used the following criteria for substance abuse to measure alcohol abuse: alcohol-induced hangovers, nausea, vomiting, memory loss, actions, and arrests as well as driving while under the influence of alcohol. Consistent with LDS doctrine, which includes prohibition of alcohol, LDS students were less likely than non-LDS students to report alcohol abuse. The authors also found the level of self-reported participation in religion was most strongly negatively correlated with alcohol abuse. In a nationwide sample, Dunn (2005) found that high school seniors who reported that religion is very important were less likely to have tried alcohol, drank 5 or more drinks in one setting, or regularly consumed alcohol than those who rated religion less important. Wills, Yaeger, and Sandy (2003) found religiosity reduced life stressors in a survey of 1,182 7^{th}-10^{th} graders. As a

result, adolescents who were more religious engaged in less use of alcohol, nicotine, or marijuana.

Religious involvement has also been found to be related to adolescent sexual behavior. Specifically, religious youth are less likely to be experienced sexually and have more conservative sexual attitudes and behaviors (Thornton & Camburn, 1989). The authors found youth active in religion to have a lower number of total sexual partners, lowered frequency of intercourse, and increased intensity of beliefs opposing premarital sex. Rostosky, Wilcox, Wright, and Randall (2004) reviewed 10 longitudinal studies from 1980-2001 and found religiosity consistently related to female adolescent sexual behavior. Their findings suggested sexual debut was delayed by conservative religious affiliation, church attendance, and social support. For males, the findings were less consistent, as religiosity was associated with delayed sexual debut only when close friends were also active within the religion.

When considering the beneficial influences of religion on mental health, delayed sexual debut, and reduced substance abuse, one common factor emerges. According to Yarhouse and Tan (2005), religious identity is shaped by social relationships, while religion also is a major socializing force. As Rostosky and colleagues (2007) asserted, the role of religion in one's life is strengthened by social connectedness and perceived social supports. Within these relationships, the influential power of religion is strengthened. For example, sexual debut was delayed for religious adolescent males who were connected socially (Rostosky et al., 2004) while Nooney found religious social support mediated effects on depression and suicidal ideation. In fact, Nooney (2005) wrote, "what appears to be 'working' about religion for adolescents, at least with regard to depression and

suicide ideation, is its influence on social support and levels of school and health stress" (p. 351).

Overall, research has repeatedly documented the protective and beneficial influence of religion on adolescent health and risk behaviors. However, one major limitation of this body of research is the lack of sensitivity to adolescent sexual identification. As the majority of religious denominations in the United States condemn same-sex behavior and/or attraction, sexual minority adolescents may face a unique challenge within these social contexts.

Religion and Sexual Minority Youth

Religion can be a source of conflict and tension for sexual minority adolescents. Many religious organizations are intolerant of those who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. According to Sherkat (2002), those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual have been criticized and rejected by nearly every major religious denomination in the United States. He furthered this, saying "there are only a handful of the more than 2500 American religious denominations that 'affirm' homosexuality as a valid and morally supportive lifestyle. Virtually all condemn homosexuality as a sin" (p. 315). As a result, many sexual minority adolescents feel alienated and disillusioned as they attempt to develop both a strong sexual identity and a coherent religious identity.

Rooted in pre-Christian Judaic times, nearly all Christian denominations have stigmatized same-sex attraction and behavior. However, some variation in official church position on homosexuality has emerged in recent years. For example, according to the official website of the Episcopal church, they are an open and affirming denomination,

accepting of all "God's people." The Episcopal church ordains openly gay pastors, elects openly gay bishops, and blesses same-sex unions. Other gay, lesbian and bisexual-inclusive church bodies include the United Church of Christ and the Metropolitan Community Church (Hoffman et al., 2006). The Evangelical Lutheran Church of America has been less progressive in their affirmation of same-sex relationships and behavior, allowing individual congregations to choose whether to bless same-sex unions and/or ordain gay and lesbian pastors. The Roman Catholic church accepts a "homosexual orientation," while disapproving of same-sex sexual activity. As a result of this condemnation, those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual are often ostracized within the Roman Catholic Church. Finally, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints asserts "homosexuality is a serious sin" (2002). The official LDS statement suggests same-sex behavior prevents people from engaging in God's plan for either family life or the salvation offered by the Gospel. Certainly, such denominational differences influence the individual religious context experienced by those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Although these aspects of the doctrine of many Christian denominations may lead many to assume that those who self-identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual must reject religion in order to accept their own sexual identity, this is not always the case. Sherkat (2002) did find that sexual minorities were more likely to become apostates than female heterosexuals. This finding was confirmed by Rosser (1991), who found that, while 84% of the 159 gay men surveyed were raised religious, only 16% attended religious services after self-identifying. However, Sherkat noted the probability of disidentifying with religion was equal for male heterosexuals and males and females who self-identified as a

sexual minority. Interestingly, he found gay men to be more active in religious organizations than heterosexual men, and lesbian or bisexual women, concluding that lesbian and bisexual women's understandings of religion as an institutionalized patriarchal system may influence participation. Although these studies offer preliminary insight and data regarding sexual minority religious affiliation, little research exists that gathers descriptive religious affiliation data with the sexual minority adolescent and young adult population.

Minority stress. Pertinent to the discussion of the sexual minority experience within the religious context is the phenomenon of minority stress (Rostosky et al., 2007). When considering the experience of sexual minorities within the dominant culture, unique psychological, emotional, and physical stressors emerge in relation to their sexual orientation and/or identity (Lewis, Derlega, Griffin, & Krowinski, 2003). The term "minority stress" encapsulates the additional pressure experienced by minority individuals as they live in a culture whose social structures and norms are representative of the majority rather than the minority. Specifically, minority stress is inclusive of social stigma, experienced prejudice, and expectations of rejection and victimization. For sexual minorities, both internalized homophobia and decisions regarding disclosure also factor into the experience of minority stress (Meyer, 2003).

Overall, minority stress, as experienced by sexual minorities includes strain experienced as one negotiates societal norms concerning relationships, sexuality, and intimacy in a heterosexist culture (Lewis et al., 2003). Specifically, Meyer (2003) further defined minority stress by offering three "underlying assumptions." First, he claimed that minority stress is distinctive, "additive to general stressors that are experienced by all

people" (p. 676). The added stressors require same-sex attracted individuals to exert more effort than other-sex attracted individuals for adaptation and stress resolution. Secondly, Meyer claimed minority stress is "chronic" and related to the "relatively stable underlying social and cultural structures" (p. 676). Thirdly, minority stress stems from social structures, institutions, and organizations; it is "socially-based" (Meyer).

Researchers have recently found correlations between experienced minority stress and mental health. In his 2003 meta-analysis, Meyer concluded that sexual minorities experience a higher incidence of mental disorders than heterosexuals. As a result, Meyer (2003) offered the construct of minority stress as a framework for understanding this unique experience in the lives of sexual minorities. Lewis and colleagues (2003) further validated the construct of minority stress with their study involving 204 gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals. Using the Measure of Gay Related Stressors (MOGS), the authors found those who reported increased levels of both gay-related stress and life stress also scored higher on a depression inventory, indicating higher symptoms of depression (Lewis et al.).

Meyer (2003) pointed towards both personal and group-level coping to alleviate the impact of gay-related stressors. Undoubtedly, sexual minorities, like all individuals, have varied ways to cope with various stressors. On a larger level, group membership offers a collective source for coping, stemming from community connectedness. The author suggested gay-affirmative churches may be representative of such communities offering a context for group-level coping. According to Meyer, "it is important to distinguish between group-level and personal resources because when group-level resources are absent, even otherwise-resourceful individuals have deficient coping"

(p. 677). To further illustrate this point, Meyer suggested the "don't ask, don't tell" policy of the U.S. army disallows group-level resources for coping and makes affiliations with other gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals extremely difficult. Without these necessary group supports, these individuals are often susceptible to added distress. As a result, both group and personal-level coping skills are vital to successfully manage the impact of minority stress.

Future researchers should consider the relationship of minority stress to a wide variety of variables (Lewis et al., 2003; Meyer, 2003). For the current study, religiosity was explored in relation to reported minority stress. Though the religious context has been experienced by some sexual minorities as a difficult and discriminatory social context due to both theological claims and organizational structure, religion has also traditionally served as a source of both individual and group-level coping. Such coping may aid in the alleviation of minority stress. Thus, in attempt to understand the sexual minority adolescent religious experience, this study considered the relationship of religiosity and prevalence of minority stress for sexual minority adolescents.

Religion and the coming out process. One apparent starting point when considering the intersection of religion and same-sex attractions is the process of sexual identity development. A handful of authors have considered this potentially chaotic experience in the lives of same-sex attracted individuals. Schuck and Liddle (2001) studied the lives of 66 18-65 year-olds, who had self-identified as gay, lesbian, or bisexual. Two thirds of the respondents noted conflicts between their religious and sexual identities. Specifically, the individuals reported depression, suicidal ideation, and shame

in the midst of the perceived conflict. One man's response to a question in this study further captures the potential conflict:

> I knew without a doubt that I had not chosen my orientation, and that I had been gay all my life. I had been saved and had committed my life to God when I was 11. If homosexuality were a result of demonic possession (as I had been taught), salvation should have "cured" it. I struggled from age 11 to age 25 to free myself from my sexuality. One night in October of 1995, I had just finished my evening devotional and meditation time when I became furious. In prayer/meditation conversation with God, I demanded to know why he had not changed me in 14 years of pious living. I was enraged and livid. I could not understand how God created me gay when His word very clearly states that gays are damned. The pain of such Divine disregard was excruciating. Why would God create someone whom he hates? The notion that I could never hope for any better eternity than Hell was killing me. In resentful obstinacy, I shouted to Heaven, "No matter if you do damn me and hate me, I will never abandon you. I am here as you created me." (p. 70)

As a result of such conflict, many individuals reported changing affiliations, abandoning religion, or self-identifying as spiritual rather than religious. In addition, Schuck and Liddle found social supports in LGB friends, family members, and religious connections were helpful in resolving the conflict. Overall, those who experienced higher levels of religious conflict rated their coming out process as more difficult than those who reported less religious conflict.

Both Schuck and Liddle (2001) and Newman and Muzzonigro (1993) reported that the age of coming out was different for those who experienced religious conflict, noting a wider spread of ages in the process of self-identification. For example, Shuck and Liddle found evidence that some individuals from conservative religions self-identified at an earlier age. They stated, "homophobic preachers ensure that awareness of LGB behaviors come early, and hearing sermons on this topic might force LGB youth to consciously consider their own same-sex attractions, as they try to decide whether these

sermons apply to them" (p. 78). In their 1993 study, Newman and Muzzonigro studied the coming out process for a group of 17- to 20-year-old male adolescents. They studied the influences of traditional family values and racial identification on the process of self-identification. Overall, they found families with a strong emphasis on traditional family values were less accepting of same-sex attractions or behaviors. Due to this finding, the authors found it interesting that a large number of participants did not report any shame or guilt when they self-identified. As a result, Newman and Muzzonigro suggested future research might consider factors that differentiate adolescents who internalize the negative messages about same-sex behavior from those who do not. The current study furthered this area of research by considering the relationship of reported sexual identity histories and religious experiences for sexual minority adolescents and young adults.

Religion as a protective factor for sexual minority youth. Though research suggests that religion serves as a protective factor for adolescent risk and health behaviors, very little scholarship has considered the contextual influence of religion on the lives of sexual minority adolescents in particular. In a study of 164 self-identified sexual minority adolescents, Rosario and colleagues (2006) found religious participation served as a protective factor for male sexual minority adolescents and not female sexual minority adolescents. They found that male adolescents had "sat with" their sexual identities longer, accepting and self-identifying earlier than sexual minority females. As a result, they hypothesized that males had achieved better integrated religious and sexual identities, thus profiting as a result of religious affiliation. Specifically, they found reduced suicidal ideation, less alcohol use, less binge drinking or marijuana use and lower number of sexual experiences for male, religiously affiliated, sexual minority

adolescents. The authors suggested future research should consider how sexual minority adolescents integrate their religious and sexual identities, as when there is a successful integration, protective factors may emerge.

In their review of the ADD Health data, Rostosky and colleagues (2007) found religiosity to have no effect on binge drinking (five or more drinks in one setting), cigarette smoking, or marijuana use in sexual minority adolescents. However, there was a 9-20% decrease of substance use participation with heterosexual adolescents. They suggested societal attitudes and teachings within religious institutions often work to sever social support for sexual minority adolescents. As a result, Rostosky and colleagues (2007) stated "religiosity is not likely to be an entirely positive developmental asset for the majority of these individuals" (p. 445). The authors suggested future research should consider a multidimensional assessment of religiosity and its interplay with each: minority stress, substance use, and psychosocial outcomes.

The previously mentioned studies have looked at the association of religiosity and substance use, suicidal ideation and/or sexual behavior for sexual minority adolescents. However, as mentioned previously religiosity has also been linked to improved psychosocial functioning in adolescents. Unfortunately, little research has considered the relationship between religiosity and psychosocial measures while accounting for sexual self-identification. As a result, the current study considered the relationship between religiosity and depressive symptoms and self-esteem for sexual minority adolescents and young adults.

Purpose and Objectives

Though recent research has suggested the importance of examining the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience in relation to various contextual variables, little research has considered the experience of the sexual minority youth within religious contexts. The goal of the current study was to examine the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience of religion using a multidimensional measure of religiosity. Inter-relationships between the various dimensions of religiosity, demographic and identity development data, psychosocial variables and levels of both reported identity integration and minority stress were explored to gain a better understanding and appreciation of the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience of religion. Such consideration of the sexual minority experience offers further understanding of the religious experience of sexual minority adolescents/young adults. Specific research questions are as follows:

1. What are the religious experiences of sexual minority adolescents/young adults? How do sexual minority adolescents/young adults describe themselves in terms of the following dimensions of religiosity, and how are the various definitions of religiosity related to one another?

    a. Religious affiliation (childhood, coming out, and current)

    b. Family religious emphasis

    c. Perceived religious conflict

    d. BMMRS dimensions of religiosity (13 dimensions)

    e. Religious comfort and religious strain (7 dimensions)

2. Are the religious experiences of sexual minority adolescents/young adults related to or dependent on demographic, sexual identity histories, or psychosocial outcomes?

a. Gender

b. Self-identification *(gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning)*

c. Degree of disclosure

d. Age of first awareness

e. Self-esteem

f. Depression

3. How do sexual minority adolescents/young adults integrate their religious and sexual identities? What is the degree of integration reported? How is reported degree of integration related to:

a. Religious experiences (as defined by question one)

b. Demographic, sexual identity histories, or psychosocial outcomes (as defined by question 2)

4. What is the level of reported minority stress for sexual minority adolescents/ young adults? How is reported minority stress related to:

a. Religious experiences (as defined by question 1)

b. Demographic, sexual identity histories, or psychosocial outcomes (as defined by question 2)

c. Integration experiences (as defined by question 3)

CHAPTER III

METHODS

Design

This study was conducted using a questionnaire methodology. A correlational design was used in order to examine associations between the sexual minority late adolescent and young adults' religious experience and demographic information, identity development, psychosocial functioning, identity integration, and minority stress.

Participants

One-hundred six sexual minority late adolescent and young adult participants (ages 18-24) were recruited from listserves of LGBTQ affirming groups, university LGBTQ centers, and gay-straight alliances nationwide. The director of LGBTQ services at Utah State University aided in recruitment, sending an introductory email with a recruitment letter to the National Consortium of LGBTQ group directors requesting forwarding to appropriate listserves (see Appendix A for a copy of the recruitment letter). Using the same method, additional listserves (not members of the National Consortium) were contacted by the student investigator. Directors were invited to contact the student investigator or faculty advisor with questions regarding the study. The number of listserves accessed with recruitment letter is unknown, as directors were not asked to report whether or not they had forwarded study information to their respective group(s).

Table 1 provides a summary of the sample's demographics. The 20 participants who listed "other" as sexual orientation included labels such as queer, transgender, and

Table 1

Participant Demographics

Variable	%
$N = 106$ (31 Male, 74 female, 1 transsexual)	
Age: $M = 20.1$ ($SD = 1.8$)	
Min. + 18 Max. = 24	
Sexual orientation	
Gay/lesbian	54
Bisexual	32
Other	20
Race	
Non-Hispanic White	75
Biracial/multiracial	10
Lationo/a	9
Asian/Pacific Islander	4
Other	2
Living arrangements	
With friends/roommates	44
With parents	26
With a romantic partner	16
Alone	9
With other family members	5
Urbanicity	
Suburban	53
Urban	30
Rural	17
Obtained educational level	
Some graduate level education	2
College graduates	6
Some college	81
High school degree	5
Currently in high school	6

no label. Additionally, 30% of the sample described their gender as male, 62% as female, and 8% of the sample listed "other," providing gender labels including femme, genderqueer, transgender, and no label. Further specifics about the sample including the percentage currently enrolled in college as well as geographical location are unknown due to sampling and recruitment methodology. As a result, caution should be exhibited when attempting to generalize research findings.

Procedures

Participants completed the questionnaire through the use of an online survey software package (PsychData). Recruitment letters sent out to listserves included the web address of the survey. Upon access to the survey, the letter of information was presented first (Appendix B). By clicking on a button labeled "continue" at the bottom of the letter of information, participants indicated informed consent to participate. They completed a series of 186 questions regarding demographic information, sexual orientation history, experience of minority stress, religious affiliation, and religious experience. The specific measures relevant are described below. Upon completion of the survey, a list of resources and referrals were provided for participants (Appendix C). Additionally, participants were given the option to submit their email addresses on a second survey and be entered in the drawing for one of 10 $50 prizes and/or receive a summary of results (Appendix D). Email addresses were kept separate from participant responses and it was not possible to link survey answers to these addresses. Ten participants were chosen at random for the prize money. They were contacted via email address to obtain mailing

address information. Upon disbursement of the prize money and the summary of results, email and mailing addresses were destroyed.

Questionnaire Measures

Copies of all measures are included in Appendix E.

Demographic Information

The demographic questionnaire assessed gender, age, race, sexual orientation, religious affiliation, educational classification and regional affiliation.

Sexual Orientation History

A 5-item questionnaire was developed for the current study to gain information regarding the participant's process of coming out and self-identification. Questions target age of first awareness, self-labeling, disclosure to family and friends, and degree of "openness" regarding one's sexuality.

Measure of Gay-Related Stressors (MOGS)

Lewis, Derlega, Berndt, Morris, and Rose (2001) developed the 56-item MOGS to measure stressors in lesbian and gay participants by collecting stressors reported in previous qualitative studies. Factor analysis yielded 10 factors (alpha = .72-.90, Lewis et al.) that include (a) family reactions, (b) family reactions to partner, (c) visibility with family and friends, (d) visibility with work and/or public, (e) violence and harassment, (f) misunderstanding, (g) discrimination at work, (h) general discrimination, (i) HIV/AIDS, and (j) sexual orientation conflict. Using this questionnaire, participants were asked to respond yes/no to various statements based on their experiences within the past year.

Such statements included: "Rejection by my brothers and sisters," "Dating someone who is openly gay," "Rumors about me due to my sexual orientation," and "Difficulty finding someone to love." A total score and scores for each subscale were calculated by adding each of the affirmative responses. Cronbach's alpha in the current study ranged from .48-.88. Subscales that yielded Cronbach's alpha levels at less than .60 were analyzed to see if scale modification could increase internal consistency. These included the misunderstanding, visibility to family and friends, discrimination at work and general discrimination subscales. Scale item analysis suggested that deleting the item regarding constitutional guarantee of rights from the misunderstanding subscale would increase the Cronbach's alpha from .57 to .64. As a result, the scale was calculated without item #35. No scale modifications proved beneficial for the visibility with family and friends, discrimination at work, or the general discrimination subscales. As a result, these subscales were not included in subsequent analyses. After the aforementioned modifications were made, Cronbach's alpha for the included scales range from .64-.83.

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

The Rosenberg *Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1989) is a 10-item 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly agree, agree, disagree,* 4 = *strongly disagree*), which assesses global self-esteem. Participants responded to statements that included "I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane" and "I certainly feel useless at times." Positively worded items were reversed scored, and higher scores indicated higher self-esteem. Concurrent validity has been demonstrated by comparing the self-esteem scale score with depressive affect, psychosomatic symptoms, nurses' ratings, peer ratings, and

a number of other constructs. Additionally, Hagborg compared the RSES with nine self-esteem domains and found the RSES to be highly correlated with other measures of self-esteem (Hagborg, 1993, Rosenberg, 1989). In the current sample, Cronbach's alpha was .92.

Center for Epidemiology Studies-Depression Scale

The Center for Epidemiology Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D; Radloff, 1977) measures depressive symptomatology and consists of 20 items that required participants to provide answers on a 4-point Likert-type scale (1 = *never*, 2 = *1-2 days*; 3 = *3-4 days*, 4= 5-7 days) regarding symptom frequency during the previous week. Examples included "I felt fearful" and "I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with the help of my family and friends." The CES-D has been found to discriminate between psychiatric inpatient and community samples, while being significantly correlated with clinician ratings of depression severity. Negative correlations have been found between the CES-D and measures of positive affect, while significant positive correlations were observed between the CES-D and other self-report measures of depression. Cronbach's alpha was .93 for this study.

Religious Experience

For the current study, a 4-item questionnaire addressing religious experience was created. Participant(s) were asked to report on religious affiliation and familial religious importance during childhood, while coming out, and perceived conflict with religion and one's self-identification.

Religious Comfort and Strain Scale

In 2000, Exline, Yali, and Sanderson developed a 20-item measure of religious comfort and strain to be used in research on religious and spiritual struggles. Finding some inconsistencies in this measure, the authors recently created a 24-item measure of religious strain and comfort (Yali & Exline, 2004). Participants were asked to rate the degree to which they identify with particular experiences on a continuum from 0 (*not at all*) to 10 (*extremely*). Statements include "See God's actions as unfair," "Believe that God disapproves of you," "Fear that religious people will condemn you for your mistakes," and "Feel nurtured or cared for by God." Two factors of religious comfort are delineated by this measure: positive relationship with God, and benefits of being affiliated with a religious faith. Total religious comfort scale and subscale Cronbach's alpha for the current study ranged from .94-.95. In addition, three factors of religious strain include: feeling unforgiven by God, possessing negative emotions towards God, and experiencing negative social interactions within the faith community. Total religious strain scale and subscale Cronbach's alpha for the current study were .81, .91, .92, and .60, respectively. Scale scores were calculated by computing the mean score for the domain.

Since its use in the current study, the authors have revised the scale for enhanced reliability and validity in the social negative domain (Email correspondence, January 23, 2008). As a result, future research should use the revised scale to further research the different facets of religious strain experienced by LGBTQ individuals.

Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiosity/Spirituality (BMMRS)

In collaboration with the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the Fetzer Institute (1999) developed a 36-item measure of key dimensions of religiosity and spirituality. The BMMRS was normed on 1,445 persons when included in the 1997-1998 General Social Survey (GSS). The GSS is a national survey that gathers data on contemporary American society in an effort to monitor social relationships, networks, and obtain information important for setting social policy. Due to GSS restrictions, five of the questions included in the BMMRS were not included in the GSS. As a result, some alpha values from the original reliability and validity sample were not available for some of the individual domains. However, on the basis of its administration in the GSS, descriptive statistics, and reliability coefficients for the BMMRS were calculated. Overall, findings supported the multidimensional measure of religiosity/spirituality.

The key domains included in this instrument (alpha = .54-.91) include: (a) daily spiritual experiences (6 items), (b) values/beliefs (2 items), (c) forgiveness (3 items), (d) private religious practices (5 items), (e) religious and spiritual coping (6 items), (f) religious support (4 items), (g) religious/spiritual history, (h) commitment (3 items), (i) organizational religiousness, (2 items) (j) religious preference (affiliation), and (k) an overall self-ranking. Items related to religious and spiritual history and religious preference were not included in the current study. Scores are calculated by summing the responses. Alpha levels for all domains with greater than two items in the current study ranged from .57 - .91. Item analysis for the private religious practices subscale (alpha = .57) indicated that deleting individual items would not increase reliability. Thus, the

private religious practices subscale was dropped for subsequent analyses due to low reliability. Additionally, the values/beliefs (alpha = .28), commitment (alpha = .56), and overall self-ranking subscales (alpha = .36) were not included in further analyses as each subscale had only two items with inadequate Cronbach alpha levels.

Religious and Sexual Identity Integration

To assess the process of religious and sexual identity integration and experienced religious-related minority stress, a 10-item questionnaire was developed for the current study. Two questions were developed and used to ask participants to report on their degree of integration. All participants were asked to describe their experiences combining their sexual orientation and religious beliefs in an open-ended response option. Next, participants were asked to report on factors aiding integration using a "check all that apply" method. Eight options found in Schuck and Liddle's (2001) qualitative study with an 18-65 year-old LGBTQ sample were provided with the option to add-in written responses. Additionally, participants reported on changes made to their religious participation that have been documented previously in research (Schuck & Liddle). Finally, six questions, modeled after the Measure of Gay-Related Stressors (Lewis et al., 2001) were created to measure the participants' experience of religious-related minority stress.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results section is divided into five primary sections that include (a) a preliminary descriptive analysis of sexual orientation histories; (b) descriptive religious experiences; (c) religious experiences examined in relation to demographic information, psychosocial outcomes, and sexual orientation histories; (d) identity integration; and (c) minority stress. Analyses for each section are presented separately, addressing specific questions in the order outlined in the objective and purposes section. Tests of skewness and kurtosis were completed and required transformations are described in Appendix F.

Preliminary Descriptive Analyses:

Sexual Orientation Histories

Participants were asked a number of questions about their sexual orientation histories to aid in both descriptive analyses and answer questions regarding the relationship of one's religious experiences to their sexual orientation histories. When asked what age they first thought they may be LGBTQ, participants reported a mean age of 13.4 years (SD = 3.1). The sample's mean age for self-labeling as gay, lesbian, bisexual, or adopting another label of personal meaning was 16.2 years (SD =2.7). The mean age for disclosing this label to another individual was 16.9 years (SD =2.2). Table 2 presents the participants' report of self-disclosure by context. When asked to rate overall openness of sexual orientation, 40% of participants had told more than half of the people they associate with, 30% less than half, 28% described themselves as totally open, with 2% reporting they had not told anyone.

Table 2

Degree of Self-Disclosure by Context (N = 106)

	Family	Friend(s)	Class/work	Religious community[a]
None	25	4	14	58
A few	29	11	19	13
Some	9	14	31	14
A lot	6	30	28	6
Everyone	37	47	14	12

[a]*N* = 103; missing 3 participants.

Question One: Religious Experience of Sexual Minority Youth

Participant religious affiliation during childhood, coming out, and current affiliation is noted in Table 3. Eighty-seven percent of the sample reported a religious membership during childhood, while 57% of participants maintained a religious affiliation while coming out. Currently, 48% of the sample identified with some religious organization, while the other 52% identified as agnostic, atheist, or reported no religious membership. Specific reported religious affiliation was assigned to one of four groups based on current denomination statement/position on LGBTQ concerns, as obtained from both official church documents and the Human Rights Campaign (www.hrc.org). In general, nonaffirming religious groups included those whose official positions condemn same-sex attractions and/or sexuality. In the current sample, religious affiliations in this category included Roman Catholic, Baptist, Latter-day Saints, Congregationalist church, Bahai, Orthodox, and Judaism. Welcoming religious groups include positions that were

Table 3

Childhood, Coming Out, and Current Religious Affiliation (N = 106)

	Childhood	Coming out	Current
Nonaffirming	61	33	21
Welcoming	23	11	14
LGB-Affirming	8	13	16
Agnostic/atheist/none	14	43	55
Have not self-disclosed		6	

welcoming to LGBTQ individuals, while not condemning nor accepting same-sex attractions and/or sexual behavior. In this sample, these denominations included the Lutheran and Methodist religious affiliations. LGB-affirming denominations included the Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Shinto, and Unitarian faiths as each have adopted official positions of acceptance for both same-sex attractions and same-sex relationships. Participants who reported no religious affiliation, self-identified as agnostic or atheist are included in the fourth group, as noted in the table.

Participants were asked to rate the degree of family religious emphasis while growing up, defined by participation in religious services and/or organizational activities. Forty-one percent of participants reported growing up in a family with high religious emphasis (weekly attendance), 22% reported moderate emphasis (attendance approximately half of the time), 23% reported low emphasis (attendance for special occasions), and 14% reported no religious emphasis. Participants were asked to rate their perceived degree of conflict with religion while coming out. Of those who had disclosed their sexual orientation ($N = 100$), 38 % of participants reported no conflict, 13% minor

conflict, 16% some conflict, 15% reported being conflicted, 16% extremely conflicted, and 2% chose not to report their perceived degree of religious conflict.

Conflict responses were collapsed into two categories, "no conflict/minor conflict" and "some conflict/extreme conflict." A chi-square analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between religious conflict categories and religious affiliation while coming out. The chi-square was significant, $\chi^2(3, N = 99) = 16.38, p = .001$. Twenty-one percent of the participants from nonaffirming religious affiliations, while coming out ($n = 33$) reported little or no conflict with their religious and sexual orientation while coming out, while the remaining 79% reported being somewhat to extremely conflicted. Fifty-eight percent of the individuals from either LGB-affirming or welcoming denominations ($n = 24$) reported little or no conflict, while the remaining 42% reported moderate to extreme conflict regarding their religious and sexual identification. Sixty-five percent of the participants who reported agnostic, atheist, or no religious affiliation ($n = 43$) rated their conflict as minor or nonexistent, while the remaining 35% noted moderate to extreme conflict.

Thirteen dimensions of religiosity were obtained from the BMMRS and are reported in Table 4. Overall, mean scores were above the midpoint of the scale for the daily spiritual practices, beliefs, forgiveness, and spirituality subscales, while mean scores were below the midpoint on all other subscales. Means and standard deviations in Table 4 are based on the original raw data, while the transformed variables were used in subsequent analyses (see Appendix F for data transformation). A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between current religious

Table 4

Participant Mean Scores (SD) on the BMMRS

	Daily spiritual	Beliefs	Foregive-ness	Private rel.	Rel. benefit	Rel. Prob.	Pos. coping	Neg. coping	Commit	Org. Rel.	Rel.	Spirit	Overall
Observed range	6-35	2-8	3-12	6-30	2-8	2-8	3-12	3-12	1-14	2-11	1-4	1-4	2-8
Possible range	6-36	2-8	3-12	5-37	2-8	2-8	3-12	3-12	1-14	2-12	1-4	1-4	2-8
Overall Mean	15.6 (7.1)	5.5 (1.4)	8.3 (8.3)	11.7 (5.1)	4.1 (2.2)	3.1 (1.7)	5.4 (2.3)	5.3 (1.8)	3.2 (2.6)	4.2 (2.3)	1.7 (.8)	2.8 (1.0)	4.5 (1.4)
Current affiliation													
Nonaffirming	16.2 (6.8)	6.4 (1.2)	9.0 (2.5)	13.9 (5.8)	5.3 (2.1)	4.1 (1.7)	5.9 (2.3)	6.2 (2.0)	4.5 (3.3)	5.8 (2.5)	2.3 (.85)	2.7 (1.0)	5.0 (1.4)
Welcoming	20.1 (8.1)	6.4 (1.1)	9.9 (1.7)	14.9 (6.1)	4.8 (2.3)	3.4 (1.8)	6.9 (2.1)	5.0 (1.4)	3.5 (2.1)	4.8 (2.3)	2.1 (.73)	3.0 (.88)	5.1 (1.3)
LGB-affirming	17.0 (6.6)	5.4 (1.3)	8.1 (2.2)	12.8 (4.7)	5.3 (2.2)	2.7 (1.0)	5.6 (2.1)	5.7 (1.7)	3.8 (1.8)	5.4 (2.1)	1.9 (.78)	3.1 (.89)	5.1 (1.3)
Agnostic/atheist/ none	13.7 (6.6)	5.0 (1.5)	7.7 (2.8)	9.8 (3.8)	3.0 (1.6)	2.6 (1.5)	4.9 (2.3)	4.9 (1.7)	2.5 (2.4)	3.0 (1.6)	1.3 (.44)	2.7 (1.1)	2.5 (2.4)
Analysis of variance by current affiliation													
$F(df = 39, 246)$	3.5	7.2	3.5	7.5	10.6	6.9	3.9	2.4	5.2	15.5	14.0	1.1	4.8
P	.019	< .001	.018	< .001	< .001	< .001	.012	.078	.002	< .001	< .001	.344	.004

affiliation categories on each subscale score of the BMMRS. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .10$, suggesting that these data meet the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were significant, Pillais trace = .763, $F(39, 246) = 2.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$.

Follow-up univariate analysis of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 4. The Games-Howell correction for violation of homogeneity was used for the post hoc tests for the spirituality scale. There were no significant differences between scores for the nonaffirming, welcoming and LGB-affirming groups on any of the subscales. The agnostic/atheist/none group scores were significantly lower than the welcoming religious group in the daily spiritual, beliefs, forgiveness, private religious practices, and positive coping domains. The agnostic/atheist/none group scores were lower than the nonaffirming group in the beliefs, private religious practices, religious problems, and commitment domains. The agnostic/atheist/none group scores were lower than all three religious groupings in the religious benefit, organizational religiousness, and religiousness scales. No significant differences were found between any of the four groups on negative coping and self-ranking of spirituality. Cohen's *d* effect size coefficients were in the small to moderate range (0 - .59) for all pair-wise comparisons. Moderate effect sizes emerged between the agnostic/atheist/none group and the nonaffirming, welcoming, and LGB affirming groups, as would be expected. Following the pattern of nonsignificance, the effect size coefficients in the spirituality domain were all in the small range (0 - .21).

Table 5 presents the sample's experiences of religious comfort and strain. Mean scores for the total religious comfort scale and the associated subscales (god positive and

Table 5

Participant Mean Scores (SD) for Religious Comfort and Strain Scale

	Religious comfort	Faith positive	God positive	Religious strain	Fear and guilt	Good negative	Social negative
Observed range (*Possible: 1-10*)	1-10	1-10	1-10	1-9	1-10	1-9	1-10
Overall Mean	4.6 (2.5)	4.7 (2.6)	4.4 (2.9)	3.2 (1.7)	2.4 (1.9)	2.7 (2.1)	5.3 (2.4)
Current affiliation							
Nonaffirming	5.2 (2.7)	5.3 (3.1)	4.9 (2.8)	3.6 (1.8)	2.8 (1.9)	3.0 (2.2)	5.9 (2.6)
Welcoming	6.1 (2.1)	5.3 (2.5)	6.8 (2.3)	3.3 (1.4)	2.6 (2.1)	2.5 (1.5)	5.8 (2.3)
LGB-affirming	4.1 (1.6)	4.5 (1.8)	3.7 (2.0)	3.1 (1.8)	2.5 (2.1)	2.7 (1.9)	4.7 (2.4)
Agnostic/atheist/none	4.0 (2.5)	4.4 (2.7)	3.8 (3.1)	3.0 (1.7)	2.1 (1.8)	2.6 (2.3)	5.2 (2.3)
Analysis of variance by current affiliation							
F (*df*)	2.9 (*3.99*)	.87 (*3.99*)	4.4 (*3.99*)	.74	1.13	.55	.95
P	0.40	.458	.006	.530	.340	.652	.420

faith positive) were near the midpoint for the current sample. Mean scores for both the fear and guilt and god negative subscales were below the midpoint, and 40% of the sample reported never experiencing items reflected in either subscale. Overall, the items included in the social negative subscale were more salient in the sample, as the sample mean score was at the midpoint and scores were normally distributed.

A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess differences between current religious affiliation groups on each subscale score of the Religious Comfort scale. Because sample sizes were unequal for this analysis, a more stringent alpha of .001 is suggested for the Box's M test of homoscedasticity (Garson, 2008). For the MANOVA with the Religious Comfort scales, Box's M was significant, $p < .001$, not meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. When Box's M is significant, Pillais trace may improve the robustness of the analyses (Garson). The results of the MANOVA were significant, Pillais trace = .17, $F(9, 297) = 2.0$, $p = .04$, $\eta^2 = .06$). Follow-up univariate analysis of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 5. The Games-Howell correction for violation of homogeneity was used for the post hoc tests for the faith positive scale. Significant differences were found between the welcoming religious affiliation and both the agnostic/atheist/none and LGB-affirming groups on the god positive subscale. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were in the small-moderate range (0 - .58) with the moderate effect sizes in the religious comfort and god positive domains, following patterns of significance.

A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was also conducted to assess for differences between current religious affiliation groups on the Religious Strain scale. Box's M was not significant, $p = .89$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The

results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .09, $F(12, 294) = .78$, $p = .67$, $\eta^2 = .03$. While follow-up univariate analyses cannot be interpreted due to nonsignificant results, they are presented in Table 5. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were small (.02 - .23).

Table 6 presents the intercorrelations among the 13 subscale scores of the BMMRS, 7 subscale scores of the Religious Comfort and Strain Scale and self-rated family religious emphasis and religious conflict, while coming out. Within the BMMRS, the negative coping subscale was inconsistently correlated with each domain. While the religious problems subscale demonstrated small-to-moderate correlations with the other 12 subscales, intercorrelations among the remaining subscales of the BMMRS were moderate to large. For the Religious Comfort and Religious Strain scale, intercorrelations within the religious comfort and religious strain domains yielded large positive correlations. Interestingly, the religious strain and religious comfort subscales were not significantly correlated with one another. Finally, both self-rated religious conflict while coming out and family religious emphasis yielded small-to-moderate correlations with all subscales.

Data reduction. In order to reduce the number of religious variables to be included in subsequent analyses, a principle components factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted. The beliefs, private religious practices, commitment, overall religiousness domains from the BMMRS were not included in the data reduction due to poor reliability, as noted previously. The analysis yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0, which were carried into subsequent analyses (Appendix G).

Table 6

Intercorrelations Between Religious Variables from BMMRS and Religious Comfort and Strain Scale

Religious variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
1. Daily spiritual	1	.60*	.59	.60*	.44*	.24	.78*	.05	.61*	.48*	.55*	.68*	.79*	.82*	.74	.70*	.02	-.02	-.06	.14	.20	.23
2. Beliefs		1	.53	.50*	.41*	.32	.64*	.10	.42*	.38*	.57*	.35*	.56*	.62*	.65	.43*	.23	.14	.10	.33*	.25	.19
3. Forgiveness			1	.46*	.35*	.18	.54*	.11	.51*	.47*	.42	.39*	.50*	.60*	.63	.43*	-.04	-.11	-.11	.14	.17	.15
4. Private				1	.50*	.42	.47*	.09	.63*	.58*	.57*	.45*	.62*	.50*	.47	.44*	.12	.15	.06	.14	.35	.36*
5. Rel. benefit					1	.42	.31*	.23	.53*	.71*	.50*	.34*	.52*	.33*	.26	.31*	.03	.15	-.03	-.05	.13	.37*
6. Rel. problems						1	.30*	.15	.30*	.37*	.32*	.20*	.31*	.18	.18	.15	.39	.42	.29	.34*	.39	.28*
7. Pos. coping							1	-07	.50*	.35*	.57*	.53*	.68*	.78*	.77	.60*	.12	.10	-.08	.15	.28	.10
8. Neg. coping								1	.27*	.34*	.25*	.10	.20*	.05	.05	-.01	.26	.33*	.31	.08	-.03	.12
9. Commitment									1	.71*	.58*	.37*	.59*	.57*	.50	.50*	-.01	.11	-02	-.08	.24	.37*
10.Organizational										1	.64*	.25*	.53*	.43*	.35	.38*	.12	.19	.11	-.01	.27	.41*
11. Religiousness											1	.26*	.72*	.53*	.59	.30*	.08	.12	.05	.07	.30	.31*
12. Spirituality												1	.85*	.54*	.44	.52*	.02	.01	-.07	.19*	.14	.08
13. Rel./spir.													1	.68*	.63	.55*	.04	.06	-.03	.15	.24	.23*
14. Rel comfort														1	.90	.87*	.04	.06	-.01	.12	.17	.10
15. God positive															1	.58*	.13	.11	.07	.16	.26	.14
16. Faith positive																1	-.03	.02	.09	.11	.02	.01
17. Rel strain																	1	.81*	.84	.72*	.24	.26*
18. Fear/guilt																		1	.62	.44*	.34	.32*
19. God neg.																			1	.36*	.08	.15
20. Social neg.																				1	.27	.17
21. Rel. conflict																					1	.31*
22. Fam																						1

* $p < .05$; Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religiosity and Spirituality: Items 1-11; Religious Comfort and Strain Scale: Items 12-18

Question Two: Religious Experiences and Demographic Data, Sexual Identity Histories, and Psychosocial Outcomes

Table 7 presents intercorrelations between the four religious composite variables and continuous demographic data, including age one considered, adopted and/or disclosed an LGBTQ label, degree of self-disclosure, and psychosocial scale scores. Small negative correlations were found between the positive and negative individual and negative communal religious variables and age at which the participant considered, adopted, or disclosed a LGBTQ label. Correlations between the psychosocial outcomes and the positive and negative individual and positive communal religious variables were small to moderate. Specifically, the negative individual religious variable was moderately negatively correlated with the RSES measure of self-esteem and moderately positively correlated with the CES-D measure of depression. No significant correlations existed between the four religious variables and degree of self-disclosure.

Mean scores and standard deviations for the four religious composite variables by the categorical demographic data (sex, gender, and sexual orientation) are presented in Table 8. Tests of skewness and kurtosis indicated that the data were normally distributed and nonsignificant Box's M analyses indicated that the data met the assumption of homoscedasticity for each of the following analyses (p = .82 - .98). A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between male and female self-reported biological sex on each scores of the four religious composite variables. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .037, $F(4, 91) = .86$, $p = .49$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Cohen's d effect size estimates were in the small range across

Table 7

Intercorrelations Between Religious Variables and Demographic Data

Demographic data	Positive individual	Negative individual	Positive communal	Negative communal
Age				
Age thought	-.11	-.26*	-.00	-.24*
Age labeled	-.12	-.12	-.01	-.25*
Age disclosed	-.25*	-.17	.01	-.16
Disclosure				
Family	-.03	-.04	-.10	.08
Friends	.07	-.04	-.13	.03
Class/work	.11	-.11	-.03	.06
Religous community	.18	-.11	.06	.02
Total openness	-.01	-.14	-.16	.04
Psychosocial				
RSES	.28*	-.38*	-.21*	.01
CSED	-.19	.36*	.06	.15

*$p < .05$.

all four religious composite variables (range = 0 - .18). Similarly, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between gender categories on the scores of the four religious composite variables. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .08, $F(8, 184) = .78$, $p = .47$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Cohen's *d* effect sizes were in the small-moderate range across all four composite variables (.04 - .33). Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between sexual orientation groups on the scores of the four created religious variables. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .062, $F(8, 184) = .73$, $p = .66$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Univariate analyses are presented in Table 9. Due to nonsignificant

Table 8

Participant Mean Scores (SD) for Religious Variables

	Sex			Gender				Sexual orientation			
	Male	Female	F[a]	Male	Female	Other	F[b]	Gay/ Lesbian	Bisexual	Other	F[b]
Positive individual	-.01 (1.1)	-.01 (.94)	.001	.01 (1.12)	-.07 (.93)	.59 (.97)	1.7	0.0 (.96)	-.19 (.93)	.37 (1.2)	1.7
Negative individual	-.26 (.98)	.10 (.99)	2.7	-.23 (.99)	.09 (1.03)	.18 (.68)	.52	-.09 (.98)	.06 (1.1)	.18 (1.0)	0.5
Positive communal	.11 (1.0)	-.04 (.99)	.43	.11 (1.02)	-.03 (.99)	-.19 (1.1)	.11	-.02 (1.1)	-.02 (.85)	-.11 (1.1)	0.1
Negative communal	.09 (1.0)	-.05 (.99)	.39	.09 (1.03)	.01 (.98)	-.49 (1.03)	.65	.12 (1.0)	-.10 (.90)	-.15 (1.2)	0.6

[a] $df = 1, 94$, [b] $df = 2, 94$.

Table 9

Childhood, Coming Out, and Current Religious Affiliation N (%) by Sex, Gender, and Sexual Orientation

	Sex			Gender			Sexual orientation		
	Male	Female	Other	Male	Female	Other	Gay/ Lesbian	Bisexual	Other
Childhood	*N*=31	*n*=74	*n*=1	*N*=32	*n*=66	*N*=8	*n*=54	*n*=32	*n*=20
Nonaffirming	16 (52)	44 (60)	1 (100)	17 (53)	38 (57)	6 (74)	26 (48)	20 (63)	15 (75)
Welcoming	8 (26)	15 (23)	0 (0)	8 (25)	14 (21)	1 (13)	15 (28)	5 (15)	3 (15)
LGB-affirming	1 (3)	7 (11)	0 (0)	1 (3)	7 (11)	0 (0)	5 (9)	3 (9)	0 (0)
Agnostic/ Athiest/None	6 (19)	8 (6)	0 (0)	6 (19)	7 (11)	1 (13)	8 (15)	4 (13)	2 (10)
Coming Out	*N*=31	*n*=68	*n*=1	*N*=32	*n*=60	*N*=8	*n*=53	*n*=30	*n*=17
Nonaffirming	14 (45)	18 (27)	1 (100)	15 (47)	16 (26)	2 (25)	15 (28)	14 (47)	4 (24)
Welcoming	4 (13)	7 (10)	0 (0)	4 (13)	7 (12)	0 (0)	8 (15)	2 (7)	1 (6)
LGB-affirming	2 (6)	11 (16)	0 (0)	2 (6)	9 (15)	2 (25)	6 (11)	2 (7)	5 (29)
Agnostic/ Athiest/None	11 (36)	32 (47)	0 (0)	11 (34)	28 (47)	4 (50)	24 (45)	12 (39)	7 (41)
Current	*N*=31	*n*=74	*n*=1	*N*=32	*n*=66	*N*=8	*n*=54	*n*=32	*n*=20
Nonaffirming	6 (19)	15 (20)	0 (0)	6 (19)	13 (20)	2 (25)	7 (13)	8 (25)	6 (30)
Welcoming	3 (10)	10 (14)	1 (100)	3 (9)	9 (13)	2 (25)	10 (19)	2 (6)	2 (10)
LGB-affirming	2 (6)	14 (19)	0 (0)	2 (6)	13 (20)	1 (13)	7 (13)	5 (16)	4 (20)
Agnostic/ Atheist/None	20 (65)	35 (47)	0 (0)	21 (66)	31 (47)	3 (37)	30 (55)	17 (53)	8 (40)

MANOVA results, follow-up analyses cannot be interpreted. Effect size estimates were in the small range (0 - .25) across all four religious composite variables.

As a result of insufficient cell sizes, relationships between categorical religious affiliation and demographic data cannot be considered using chi-square analyses. The assumption of expected values of at least five in each cell was violated for each cross tabs matrix. Table 9 presents the number and frequency of participants' reported sex, gender and sexual orientation by childhood, coming out, and current religious affiliation. Across each categorical grouping (sex, gender, and sexual orientation), there is a shift from a nonaffirming childhood religious affiliation to a current agnostic/atheist/none religious categorization.

Differences between each categorical religious affiliation group on the continuous demographic data, including age, degree of disclosure and psychosocial outcomes were analyzed using multivariate analysis of variance procedures. Means and standard deviations of each demographic measure by religious affiliation are reported in Tables 10, 11, and 12. Means and standard deviations in the tables are based on original raw data, while transformed data were used as the dependent variables in subsequent analyses. Differences between childhood religious affiliation groups on continuous demographic data were analyzed and are presented in Table 10. A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between childhood religious affiliation groups on the age(s) that one considered, adopted and disclosed a LGBT label. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .71$, suggesting that the data met the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .07,

Table 10

Mean (SD) of Age, Degree of Disclosure, and Psychosocial Outcomes by Childhood Religious Affiliation

	Age (n = 95)			Degree of disclosure (n = 103)					Psychosocial (n= 105)	
	Thought	Labeled	Disclosed	Family	Friend	Class work	Religion	Total	RSES	CESD
Observed range	6-22	8-22	12-23	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-4	1.4-4.0	1.1-3.7
Overall mean	13.2 (3.2)	16.1 (2.6)	16.8 (2.2)	3.0 (1.6)	4.0 (1.2)	3.1 (1.2)	2.0 (1.4)	3.0 (.80)	3.0 (0.7)	2.0 (0.6)
Childhood affiliation										
Nonaffirming (n = 61)	12.8 (3.2)	15.8 (2.6)	16.6 (2.0)	2.9 (1.6)	3.9 (1.2)	3.1 (1.3)	2.1 (1.5)	2.9 (0.8)	3.0 (0.7)	2.0 (0.6)
Welcoming (n = 23)	14.2 (2.6)	16.7 (2.4)	17.3 (2.3)	3.2 (1.6)	4.2 (1.0)	3.4 (1.1)	2.1 (1.5)	3.1 (0.8)	3.0 (0.7)	1.9 (0.5)
LGB-affirming (n = 8)	13.2 (5.2)	16.6 (3.3)	16.6 (2.6)	3.6 (1.7)	4.3 (1.2)	3.5 (1.2)	2.4 (1.5)	2.9 (0.8)	2.6 (0.5)	2.2 (0.4)
Agnostic/atheist/none (n = 14)	13.4 (3.1)	16.4 (3.3)	17.4 (2.6)	2.8 (1.9)	3.7 (1.4)	2.6 (1.1)	1.3 (0.6)	3.0 (0.9)	2.9 (0.6)	2.0 (0.6)
Analysis of variance by current affiliation										
F	1.05	.72	.94	.60	.76	1.32	1.43	.14	1.02	.67
(df)	(3, 91)	(3, 91)	(3, 91)	(3, 99)	(3, 99)	(3, 99)	(3, 99)	(3,99)	(3, 101)	(3, 101)
P	.38	.54	.42	.62	.52	.27	.24	.94	.39	.57

Table 11

Mean (SD) of Age, Degree of Disclosure, and Psychosocial Outcomes by Coming Out Religious Affiliation

	Age (n = 93)			Degree of disclosure (n = 97)					Psychosocial (n= 99)	
	Thought	Labeled	Disclosed	Family	Friend	Class work	Religion	Total	RSES	CESD
Observed range	6-22	8-22	12-23	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-4	1.4-4.0	1.1-3.7
Overall mean	13.2 (3.2)	16.2 (2.6)	16.9 (2.2)	3.1 (1.7)	4.1 (1.0)	3.2 (1.2)	2.1 (1.4)	3.0 (.80)	2.95 (.59)	2.0 (0.59)
Coming out affiliation										
Nonaffirming (n = 33)	12.3 (3.6)	15.5 (3.0)	16.4 (2.2)	3.2 (1.6)	4.1 (1.0)	3.2 (1.2)	2.1 (1.3)	3.0 (.76)	2.9 (.71)	2.2 (.66)
Welcoming (n = 11)	14.4 (2.5)	16.5 (2.5)	16.7 (1.6)	3.9 (1.5)	4.3 (.82)	3.6 (.97)	1.8 (1.3)	3.0 (.82)	3.2 (.52)	1.6 (.41)
LGB-affirming (n = 13)	13.6 (3.0)	16.3 (2.7)	17.3 (2.3)	2.9 (1.6)	4.5 (.66)	3.7 (.86)	3.2 (1.5)	3.1 (.49)	2.9 (.39)	2.9 (.47)
Agnostic/atheist/none (n = 43)	13.6 (2.9)	16.7 (2.3)	17.2 (2.1)	2.8 (1.7)	3.9 (1.2)	2.9 (1.2)	1.9 (1.4)	3.0 (.79)	2.9 (.65)	2.0 (.59)
Analysis of variance by current affiliation										
F	1.6	1.3	1.1	1.4	.96	1.8	3.0	.05	.83	2.6
(df)	(3, 89)	(3, 89)	(3.89)	(3, 93)	(3,93)	(3, 93)	(3, 93)	(3, 93)	(3, 95)	(3, 95)
P	.19	.29	(3.7	.26	.41	.16	.03	.98	.48	.06

Table 12

Mean (SD) of Age, Degree of Disclosure, and Psychosocial Outcomes by Current Religious Affiliation

	Age (n = 95)			Degree of disclosure (n = 103)					Psychosocial (n= 105)	
	Thought	Labeled	Disclosed	Family	Friend	Class work	Religion	Total	RSES	CESD
Observed range	6-22	8-22	12-23	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-4	1.4-4.0	1.1-3.7
Overall mean	13.2 (3.2)	16.1 (2.7)	16.8 (2.2)	3.0 (1.6)	4.0 (1.2)	3.1 (1.2)	2.0 (1.4)	3.0 (.82)	2.9 (.60)	2.0 (.59)
Current affiliation										
Nonaffirming (n = 21)	13.5 (3.2)	16.1 (3.0)	16.9 (2.4)	2.8 (1.7)	3.7 (1.2)	2.9 (1.3)	1.8 (1.3)	2.8 (.83)	3.0 (.58)	2.0 (.71)
Welcoming (n = 14)	12.9 (3.6)	16.5 (2.3)	16.2 (1.7)	3.2 (1.4)	4.0 (.91)	3.4 (1.0)	2.1 (1.4)	2.9 (.76)	3.0 (.66)	1.8 (.51)
LGB-affirming (n = 16)	13.5 (3.6)	16.4 (2.6)	17.1 (2.3)	2.9 (1.7)	4.3 (1.1)	3.4 (1.1)	2.8 (1.4)	3.0 (.73)	2.6 (.51)	2.3 (.47)
Agnostic/atheist/none (n = 55)	13.2 (3.0)	16.0 (2.7)	16.9 (2.1)	3.1 (1.7)	3.1 (1.3)	3.1 (1.3)	1.9 (1.4)	3.0 (.85)	3.0 (.62)	2.0 (.58)
Analysis of variance by current affiliation										
F	.16	.18	.44	.20	.66	.78	2.8	.59	1.6	1.9
(df)	(3, 91)	(3, 91)	(3, 91)	(3, 99)	(3, 99)	(3, 99)	(3, 99)	(3, 99)	(3, 101)	(3, 101)
P	.92	.91	.72	.90	.58	.51	.04	.62	.19	.14

$F(9, 273) = .67$, $p = .73$, $\eta^2 = .02$. Cohen's *d* effect sizes for each pairwise comparison were in the small range (.02 - .23).

Second, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between childhood religious affiliation groups on degree of disclosure to family, friends, class or work, religious community, and total openness. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .61$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .16, $F(15, 291) = 1.10$, $p = .36$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Similarly, Cohen's *d* effect sizes were in the small-moderate range (0 - .43) for all pairwise comparisons with moderate effect sizes emerging between the agnostic/atheist/none group and each of the three religious groups for the religious disclosure scale. Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between religious affiliation on the psychosocial measures, the RSES and CSED. Box's M was nonsignificant with the correction to alpha for unequal sample sizes, $p = .04$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity (Garson, 2008). The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .06, $F(6, 202) = 1.07$, $p = .38$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Effect size estimates were in the small-moderate range (0 - .32) for all pairwise comparisons. Due to nonsignificant MANOVA results, follow-up analyses for each MANOVA can not be interpreted but are presented in Table 10.

An analysis of the differences between coming out religious affiliation groups on continuous demographic data are presented in Table 11. A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between coming out religious

An analysis of the differences between coming out religious affiliation groups on continuous demographic data are presented in Table 11. A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between coming out religious affiliation groups on age(s) that one considered, adopted, and disclosed a LGBT label. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .67$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .09, $F(9, 267) = .89$, $p = .54$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Effect size estimates were in the small-moderate range for each pairwise comparison (0 - .32). Second, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between coming out religious affiliation groups on degree of disclosure. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .73$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .23, $F(15, 273) = 1.53$, $p = .09$, $\eta^2 = .08$. Cohen's d effect sizes were in the small-moderate range for each pairwise comparison (0 - .45). Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between coming out religious affiliation groups on the psychosocial measures. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .54$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .10, $F(6, 190) = 1.59$, $p = .15$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Cohen's d effect sizes were in the small to moderate range (0 - .45) with moderate effect sizes between the welcoming religious group and all other religious groupings on both the CESD and RSES. Due to nonsignificant MANOVA results, follow-up analyses cannot be interpreted but are presented in Table 11.

Differences between current religious affiliation groups on continuous demographic data were analyzed and are presented in Table 12. A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between current religious affiliation on the age(s) that one considered, adopted, and disclosed a LGBT label. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .83$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .11, $F(9, 273) = 1.14$, $p = .33$, $\eta^2 = .04$. Cohen's *d* effect sizes were in the small range (0 - .22) for all pairwise comparisons. Second, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between current religious affiliation groups on degree of disclosure. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .88$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .15, $F(15, 291) = 1.04$, $p = .42$, $\eta^2 = .05$. Cohen's *d* effect sizes were in the small to moderate range (0 - .37) for each pairwise comparison. Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between childhood religious affiliation groups on the psychosocial measures. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .90$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .05, $F(6, 202) = .89$, $p = .50$, $\eta^2 = .03$. Effect size estimates were in the small to moderate range (0 - .45) with moderate effect sizes emerging between the LGB affirming group and all other religious groups on both the RSES and CSED.

Question Three: Religious Experiences and Identity Integration

Participants were asked to report on their experiences of religious and sexual identity integration. Table 13 presents two measures of integration, degree of identity integration, and frequency of experience simultaneously being openly LGBTQ and religious. Sixty-seven participants described their experiences combining these identities in an open-ended response option. Participant statements were read and analyzed for emerging themes. Participant statements were then categorized into four predominant themes. The themes that emerged included having a spiritual rather than religious identity, having no religious identity, experiencing no conflict, and currently experiencing conflict.

Twenty-two of the participants described considering themselves spiritual rather than religious, with either no religious history or reporting a decision to leave religion. For example, one participant stated "my spirituality involves accepting and loving everyone who should be loved and accepted… in my former religion I was loved as long as they thought I was straight and chaste." Nineteen of the participants stated they do not have a current religious identity. Both individuals who reported leaving religion and those who never have affiliated with a religious tradition were included in this category. Statements included in this category reported a lack of religious identity *and* no report of spiritual beliefs. Participant statements that reported a spiritual identification after leaving religion were included with the aforementioned category. Statements included "I don't believe in god or any sentient creator…. good and evil do not exist outside of

Table 13

Reported Religious and Sexual Identity Integration

Degree of integration	*N* (%)
Not at all	42 (40)
Somewhat	43 (40)
Completely	21 (20)
Experiences being both LGBTQ and religious	
Never	57 (54)
Sometimes	40 (37)
Always	9 (9)

Note. $N = 106$.

human construct" and "as I sexually identified myself my religious beliefs broke down.... as I thought about it more the possibilities of god being real seemed to disappear."

Eighteen participants reported no conflict while continuing to maintain both a religious and sexual identity. Responses reported either an affiliation with a LGBT-friendly religious affiliation and/or a feeling that the two identities never conflicted. Statements included "once I accepted I was not heterosexual, it was complete acceptance. The two identities have never clashed" and "it had more to do with finding an accepting church and pastor." Eight of the participant responses centered on a theme of current conflict. One participant responded "HA. Um, what experience? When I'm in the religious part of my life, it's like I just don't have a sexuality. That's the only way it ever worked." In describing their religious and sexual identity integration, one participant stated "being gay and Catholic seems to be almost impossible with the church's condemnation of anything that even remotely appears to be part of gay culture."

In addition, the 60% of participants who reported some degree of religious and sexual

Table 14

Factors Aiding in Religious and Sexual Identity Integration

Factors	*N* (%)
Accepting self and having a sense of completeness	42 (66)
Knowledge, biblical or religious readings	32 (50)
Support of friends involved in the church	20 (31)
Family Support	20 (31)
Spiritual reasons	19 (30)
Affirming religious organization	17 (27)
Clergy support	11 (17)
Therapist support	9 (14)

Note. $N = 64$.

identity integration were then asked to describe the factors that facilitated integration. These responses are summarized in Table 14. The most frequently endorsed factors aiding in identity integration were increased self-acceptance and efforts to obtain greater knowledge about their religious teachings.

Participants were also asked to report on their experiences simultaneously being openly LGBTQ and religious (Table 13). Of the 106 participants, 46% reported having at least some experiences being openly LGBTQ and religious at the same time. These participants were asked to describe their experiences being both religious and LGBTQ. Of the 49 participants who reported some experiences being both LGBTQ and religious, 37 participants described their experiences when asked for further explanation using an open-ended response option. Participant statements were read and analyzed for emerging themes. Participant statements were then categorized into four predominant themes. The themes that emerged included having no religion, valuing one's own spirituality and relationship with God, engagement with a supportive and accepting faith tradition, and

choosing to live with both identities. Although they had reported some ability to be openly LGBTQ and religious simultaneously, four responses were categorized as having no religion. One participant in this category reported being atheist and three participants acknowledged conflict within their religious communities and chose to leave. One participant reported "I've lost my faith. It seems hopeless to me. Why should I go to church and worship a god when I'm going to hell anyway?" Another participant responded:

> I had a difficult experience growing up in the LDS church. Being a regular participant, in fact a priesthood leader, I was ridden with guilt and confusion. I also had a sense of my worth as a human being and never really believed the negative attitudes that I was taught about gays.... I eventually became an atheist.

Fourteen responses centered on the theme of one's own spirituality and relationship with god. Participant responses in this category included those that suggested a belief that god made them and/or accepted them as LGBTQ and/or a decision to become more spiritual rather than religious. One participant reported "I believe I was made gay for a reason, if anything we don't need more people. We are overpopulated. So God made me gay." Another participant stated:

> My religious experience exists outside of any specific community, and I see a personal relationship and communication with my God. I'm able to do this privately with myself with no need for approval from others or expression of my beliefs to others....The God that I have found loves all things equally and infinitely, and does not condemn or judge our actions.

Twelve participants reported engagement in an accepting and supportive faith tradition. Statements included "I'm a reform Jew. My first synagogue was lay-led by a lesbian. The synagogue I grew up at has performed gay marriages," and "the Episcopal

church is really good to the LGBT community." Finally, 7 of the 37 participants reported living with both their LGBTQ identity and religious identity. While acknowledging potential conflict, statements reflected a desire to accept both parts of their identities without denying either. One participant stated "there is discrimination in each sphere against the other. I don't boast either my spirituality or sexual orientation really in any aspect in life, but I don't deny either one." Another participant responded "I feel that I cannot help but be bisexual, and I cannot imagine not being religious, so even though these two elements of my life conflict I live with the duality to the best of my ability."

Participants were asked to report on changes made to religious participation in relation to their sexual identification. Seven changes reported in previous literature were listed and participants were asked to "check all that apply." Participants were also given the option to respond with "other" and enter responses in open-ended format. One participant stated he or she had left the church. These changes are reported in Table 15.

An analysis of the differences between identity integration categories on religious composite variables are presented in Table 16. A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between degree of integration (*not at all, somewhat, completely*) on the four religious composite variables developed in Question 1. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .07$, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were significant, Pillais trace = .30, $F(8, 184) = 4.0$, $p = < .001$, $\eta^2 = .15$. Follow-up univariate analysis of variance procedures with Sheffe post-oc tests were conducted and presented in Table 16. The Games-Howell correction for violation of homogeneity of variance was used for the post hoc tests for the negative

Table 15

Frequency of Changes in Religious Participation

Changes	*N* (%)
Consider myself spiritual rather than religious	49 (46)
Reinterpreted religious teachings	45 (43)
No longer identify with any religion	24 (23)
Changed religious affiliations	20 (19)
Remained in my religion and did not change my participation	16 (15)
Did not change religious beliefs but stopped attending	13 (12)
Remained in my religion and attempted to change attitudes	5 (5)

Note. $N = 106$.

Table 16

Means (SD) of Composite Religious Variables by Degree of Integration

Degree of integration	Positive individual	Negative individual	Positive communal	Negative communal
Not at all	-.49 (.91)	.15 (1.0)	-.25 (.93)	.14 (1.0)
Somewhat	.35 (.93)	.13 (1.1)	.16 (.93)	-.02 (.90)
Completely	.24 (.97)	-.57 (.61)	.16 (1.2)	-.23 (1.1)
Analysis of variance				
F[a]	8.6	4.2	2.0	.88
p	< .001	.02	.15	.42

[a] $df = 2, 94$.

individual composite variable. Significant differences were found between the *not at all* group and both the *somewhat* and *completely* integration groups on the positive individual composite variable. Additionally, significant differences were found between the *completely* group and both the *not at all* and *somewhat* integration groups on the negative individual composite variable. Cohen's *d* effect size coefficients for all pairwise

comparisons were in the small-to-moderate range (0-.41) with moderate effect sizes following patterns of significance in both the positive individual and negative individual religious composite variables.

As a result of insufficient cell sizes, relationships between degree of integration and categorical religious affiliation cannot be considered using a chi-square analysis. The assumption of expected values of at least five in each cell was violated for each cross tabs matrix. Table 17 presents the participants' reported degree of integration by childhood, coming out, and current religious affiliation. In general, degree of sexual and religious identity integration was disbursed evenly across childhood, coming out, and current religious affiliations. However, the participants who reported an LGB-affirming religious affiliation currently or coming out appeared more likely to report some to complete integration.

A chi-square analysis was conducted to assess the relationships between categorical demographic data (sex, gender, and sexual orientation) and degree of integration. The participants did not differ by reported biological sex: $\chi^2(2, N = 105) = .41, p = .81$; gender, $\chi^2(4, N=106) = 1.6, p = .81$; nor sexual orientation $\chi^2(4, N = 106) = 2.9, p = .57$. The minimum expected value of at least five was violated for both the gender and sexual orientation categorical groups. Table 18 presents the participants' degree of integration by categorical demographic data. The number of participants who reported no, some, and complete identity integration is evenly spread across categories of sex, gender, and sexual orientation. An analysis of the differences between degree of identity integration on demographic continuous variables (age of awareness, self-labeling

Table 17

Degree of Integration by Childhood, Coming Out, and Current Religious Affiliation N (%)

Religious affiliation		Degree of integration		
		Not at all	Somewhat	Completely
Childhood	(n = 106)	n = 42	n = 43	n = 21
Nonaffirming	(n = 61)	24 (57)	28 (65)	9 (43)
Welcoming	(n = 23)	8 (19)	8 (19)	7 (33)
LGB-affirming	(n = 8)	3 (7)	3 (7)	2 (10)
Agnostic/atheist/none	(n = 14)	7 (17)	4 (9)	3 (14)
Coming out	(n = 100)	n = 41	n = 40	n = 19
Nonaffirming	(n = 33)	14 (34)	13 (33)	6 (32)
Welcoming	(n = 11)	4 (10)	5 (12)	2 (10)
LGB-affirming	(n = 13)	0 (0)	8 (20)	5 (26)
Agnostic/atheist/none	(n = 43)	23 (56)	14 (35)	6 (32)
Current		n = 42	n = 43	n = 21
Nonaffirming	(n = 42)	10 (24)	8 (19)	3 (14)
Welcoming	(n = 21)	5 (12)	8 (19)	1 (5)
LGB-affirming	(n = 16)	1 (2)	10 (22)	5 (24)
Agnostic/atheist/none	(n = 55)	26 (62)	17 (40)	12 (57)

Table 18

Degree of Integration by Demographic Data (%)

	Sex		Gender			Sexual orientation		
Degree of integration	Male n = 31	Female n = 74	Male n = 32	Female n = 66	Other n = 8	Gay/ Lesbian n = 54	Bisexual n = 32	Other n = 20
Not at all	35	42	34	44	25	41	48	25
Somewhat	42	39	44	38	50	39	34	55
Completely	23	10	22	18	25	20	19	20

and disclosure; degree of disclosure; psychosocial measures) are presented in Table 19. A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between degree of integration on age of self-awareness, labeling, and disclosure. Box's M was

significant, $p < .001$, thus not meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. When the assumption of homoscedasticity is not met, Pillai's trace may improve the robustness of the test (Garson, 2008). The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace =.04, F (6, 182) = .65, p = .69, η^2 = .02. Follow-up univariate analysis of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 19. Effect size coefficients were in the small range for each pairwise comparison (0 - .19). Next, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between degree of integration on degree of disclosure. Box's M was nonsignificant, p = .99, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .09, F(10, 194) = .87, p = .56, η^2 = .04. Follow-up univariate analyses of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 19. Effect size coefficients were in the small range for each pairwise comparison (0 - .26). Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between degree of integration on the two psychosocial measure scores, RSES and CSED. Box's M was nonsignificant, p = .19, meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .02, F(4, 204) = .38, p = .83, η^2 = .01. Follow-up univariate analyses of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 19. Effect size estimates were in the small range for each pairwise comparison (0 - .19).

Question Four: Minority Stress, Religious Experiences, and Demographic Data

Nine dimensions of minority stress were retained for the analysis and presented in

Table 19

Mean (SD) of Age, Degree of Disclosure,and Psychosocial Outcomes by Integration

	Age			Degree of disclosure					Psychosocial	
	Thought	Labeled	Disclosed	Family	Friend	Class work	Religion	Total	RSES	CESD
Observed range	6-22	8-22	12-23	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-5	1-4	1.4-4.0	1.1-3.7
Overall mean	13.2 (3.2)	16.1 (2.7)	16.8 (2.2)	3.0 (1.7)	4.0 (1.2)	3.1 (1.2)	2.0 (1.4)	3.0 (.82	3.0 (.60)	2.0 (.59)
Degree of integration										
No at all	13.0 (3.6)	16.2 (3.0)	17.1 (2.5)	3.0 (1.7)	3.8 (1.3)	2.9 (1.3)	1.7 (1.3)	2.9 (.89)	2.9 (.65	2.0 (.61)
Somewhat	13.0 (2.9)	15.8 (2.3)	16.5 (1.6)	2.9 (1.6)	4.1 (1.0)	3.2 (1.1)	2.1 (1.3)	2.9 (.77)	2.9 (.60)	2.0 (.63)
Completely	14.1 (2.7)	16.6 (2.7)	17.0 (2.5)	3.3 (1.7)	4.1 (1.2)	3.4 (1.4)	2.5 (1.61)	3.1 (.79)	3.1 (.48	1.8 (.42)
Analysis of variance by current affiliation										
F	.92	.56	.73	.34	.65	1.2	2.4	.36	.69	.55
(*df*)	(2, 92)	(2, 92)	(2, 92)	(2, 100)	(2, 100)	(2, 100)	(2, 100)	(2, 100)	(2, 102)	(2, 102)
P	.41	.57	.48	.72	.52	.30	.09	.70	.50	.58

Table 20. Means and standard deviations in Tables 20-22, 24, and 26 are based on original raw data while transformed data were used as dependent variables in subsequent analyses. A multivariate analysis of variance procedure was used to assess for differences between current religious affiliation categories on each transformed minority stress scale score. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .11$, suggesting that these data meet the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .38, $F(27, 282) = 1.49$, $p = .06$, $\eta^2 = .13$. Univariate follow-up analyses are presented in Table 20 but cannot be interpreted due to nonsignificant results. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were in the small to moderate range, 0 - .34. Moderate effect sizes were found between the agnostic/atheist/none group and the welcoming and LGB-affirming groups on the religious minority stress subscale. Only a small effect size found between the agnostic/atheist/none and nonaffirming groups on the religious subscale.

A multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to assess for differences between childhood religious affiliation categories on each minority stress scaled score. Using a more stringent alpha of .001 because of the unequal sample sizes, Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .008$, suggesting that these data meet the assumption of homoscedasticity (Garson, 2008). The results of the MANOVA were nonsignificant, Pillais trace = .36, $F(27, 282) = 1.4$, $p = .08$, $\eta^2 = .12$. Univariate follow-up analyses are presented in Table 21 but cannot be interpreted due to nonsignificant results. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were in the small to moderate range, 0-.61. The largest effect sizes (.55 and .61) were found between the LGB-affirming and both the nonaffirming and welcoming groups on the family reaction to partner subscale. Additionally, moderate

Table 20

Participant Mean Scores (SD) for the Measure of Gay-related Stressors by Current Affiliation

	Family reaction	Reaction to partner	Visibility	Violence and harrassment	Misunder-standing	HIV/ AIDS	Sexual orientation conflict	Religion[a]	Total
Observed range (*Possible*)	1-9 *(1-9)*	1-4 *(1-4)*	1-6 *(1-6)*	1-8 *(1-8)*	1-3 *(1-3)*	1-8 *(1-8)*	1.5 *(1-5)*	1-7 *(1-7)*	7-44 *(7.44)*
Overall mean	4.4 (2.2)	1.8 (.97)	4.4 (1.4)	3.4 (2.1)	2.8 (.54)	2.9 (1.8)	3.2 (1.4)	2.3 (1.7)	16.7 (6.2)
Current affiliation									
Nonaffirming ($N = 20$)	4.1 (2.4)	2.0 (1.1)	4.0 (1.5)	3.6 (2.3)	3.0 (.22)	2.6 (1.6)	3.4 (1.4)	3.0 (2.2)	16.6 (6.9)
Welcoming ($N = 14$)	4.4 (2.2)	2.2 (1.1)	4.6 (1.6)	3.3 (2.2)	2.8 (.60)	2.0 (1.6)	3.6 (1.4)	2.0 (1.6)	17.0 (5.3)
LGB-affirming ($N = 15$)	4.7 (2.5)	1.6 (1.0)	4.7 (1.0)	3.6 (2.2)	2.9 (.26)	2.6 (1.1)	3.3 (1.4)	2.3 (1.7)	17.3 (6.0)
Agnostic/atheist/none ($N = 55$)	4.4 (2.1)	1.7 (.88)	4.4 (1.4)	3.3 (2.1)	2.7 (.63)	3.3 (2.0)	2.9 (1.4)	3.3 (2.0)	16.7 (6.3)
Analysis of variance by current affiliation									
$F(3, 100)$	.23	1.2	.50	.15	1.6	3.5	1.3	2.8	.05
P	.88	.32	.68	.93	.19	.02	.29	.05	.99

[a]Religion variable is not included in the total minority stress score.

Table 21

Participant Mean Scores (SD) for the Measure of Gay-related Stressors by Childhood Affiliation

	Family reaction	Reaction to partner	Visibility	Violence and harrassment	Misunder-standing	HIV/ AIDS	Sexual orientation conflict	Religion[a]	Total
Observed range (*Possible*)	1-9 *(1-9)*	1-4 *(1-4)*	1-6 *(1-6)*	1-8 *(1-8)*	1-3 *(1-3)*	1-8 *(1-8)*	1.5 *(1-5)*	1-7 *(1-7)*	7-44 *(7.44)*
Overall mean	4.4 (2.2)	1.8 (.97)	4.4 (1.4)	3.4 (2.1)	2.8 (.54)	2.9 (1.8)	3.2 (1.4)	2.3 (1.7)	16.8 (6.2)
Cchildhood affiliation									
Nonaffirming ($N = 60$)	4.6 (2.2)	1.9 (.96)	4.4 (1.3)	3.5 (2.1)	2.9 (.28)	2.9 (1.7)	3.1 (1.4)	2.7 (2.0)	17.4 (6.0)
Welcoming ($N = 23$)	4.2 (1.9)	2.1 (1.0)	4.5 (1.3)	3.2 (2.0)	2.7 (.63)	2.7 (2.0)	3.1 (1.4)	2.0 (1.1)	16.6 (5.1)
LGB-affirming ($N = 7$)	4.3 (2.3)	1.0 (.00)	4.5 (1.3)	2.9 (2.6)	2.6 (.78)	2.3 (.89)	4.0 (1.4)	2.0 (1.2)	15.0 (6.5)
Agnostic/atheist/none ($N = 14$)	3.6 (2.5)	1.6 (.94)	4.0 (1.8)	3.2 (2.3)	2.5 (.85)	3.4 (2.2)	3.0 (1.4)	1.3 (.83)	15.3 (8.4)
Analysis of varaiance by current affiliation									
F	.93	3.0	.25	.31	3.3	1.1	.94	3.0	.69
P	.43	.04	.86	.82	.02	.36	.42	.03	.56

[a]Religion variable is not included in the total minority stress score.

Table 22

Participant Mean Scores (SD) for the Measure of Gay-related Stressors by Coming Out Affiliation

	Family reaction	Reaction to partner	Visibility	Violence and harrassment	Misunder-standing	HIV/ AIDS	Sexual orientation conflict	Religion[a]	Total
Observed range (*Possible*)	1-9 *(1-9)*	1-4 *(1-4)*	1-6 *(1-6)*	1-8 *(1-8)*	1-3 *(1-3)*	1-8 *(1-8)*	1.5 *(1-5)*	1-7 *(1-7)*	7-44 *(7.44)*
Overall mean	4.4 (2.3)	1.8 (.97)	4.4 (1.3)	3.4 (2.2)	2.8 (.54)	2.9 (1.7)	3.2 (1.4)	2.3 (1.7)	17.2 (6.2)
Coming out affiliation									
Nonaffirming ($N = 33$)	5.0 (2.5)	2.0 (1.0)	4.6 (1.3)	4.0 (2.3)	2.9 (.24)	3.3 (2.0)	3.3 (1.4)	3.5 (2.1)	19.2 (6.5)
Welcoming ($N = 11$)	3.4 (1.6)	2.2 (.98)	4.0 (1.4)	2.2 (1.5)	2.5 (.82)	2.6 (2.2)	3.0 (1.5)	2.4 (1.4)	13.9 (4.2)
LGB-affirming ($N = 12$)	4.8 (2.3)	2.0 (1.2)	4.9 (.95)	3.5 (2.3)	2.9 (.29)	2.5 (1.1)	3.0 (1.2)	2.2 (1.5)	17.6 (6.2)
Agnostic/atheist/none ($N = 42$)	4.2 (2.1)	1.6 (.83)	4.2 (1.4)	3.4 (2.1)	2.7 (.64)	3.0 (1.7)	3.1 (1.5)	1.4 (.89)	16.2 (6.0)
Analysis of varaiance by current affiliation									
$F(3, 94)$	1.9	1.6	1.3	2.0	2.9	.97	.22	.11	2.7
P	\.13	.20	.29	.12	.04	.41	.89	< .001	.05

[a]Religion variable is not included in the total minority stress score.

effect sizes were found between the agnostic/atheist/none groupand all three religious groups on the religious minority stress subscale.

A multivariate analysis of variance was used to assess for differences between coming out religious affiliation categories on each minority stress scale score. The six individuals who reported they had not self-identified were not included in these analyses. Box's M was significant, $p < .001$, not meeting the assumption of homoscedasticity. When the assumption of homoscedasticity is not met, Pillai's trace may improve the robustness of the test (Garson, 2008). The results of the MANOVA were significant, Pillias trace = .47, $F(27, 264) = 1.8$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2 = .16$.

Follow-up univariate analysis of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 22. The Games-Howell correction for violation of homogeneity was used for the post hoc tests for the misunderstanding and religion subscales. There were significant differences between the nonaffirming and agnostic/ atheist/none groups on the experience of religious-related minority stress. There were no other significant differences between the nonaffirming, welcoming, LGB-affirming and agnostic/atheist/none groups on any of the other subscales. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were in the small to moderate range, 0-.55. Following the pattern of significance, the largest effect sizes were found between all three religious groupings and the agnostic/atheist/none group on the religious minority stress items. Additionally, moderate effect sizes (.22-.44) were noted between the nonaffirming and welcoming groups on the visibility, violence/harassment, misunderstanding, and total minority stress subscales.

Table 23 presents the intercorrelations among the nine subscale scores of the MOGS and four religious composite variables. Small correlations were found between the minority stress subscales and the positive individual and positive communal religious composite variables. Interestingly, a significant positive correlation (.25) was found between the religious minority stress subscale and the positive individual composite variable. Similarly, a positive moderate correlation (.28) was found between total minority stress and the positive communal religious composite variable. Small-to-moderate correlations were found between the minority stress variables and the negative individual and negative communal religious composite variables.

Multiple MANOVAS were conducted to assess for differences between categorical demographic data and reported minority stress. A multivariate analysis of

Table 23

Intercorrelations Between Minority Stress and Religious Composite Variables

Variables	Positive individual	Negative individual	Positive communal	Negative communal
Family reactions	.10	.22*	-.07	.28*
Reactions to partner	.13	.03	-.04	.05
Visibility	.08	.10	-.14	.25*
Violence	.05	.25*	-.13	.23*
Misunderstanding	.10	.11	.04	.27*
HIV/AIDS	-.11	.04	-.18	.23*
Sexual orientation conflict	-.12	.28*	-.01	.19
Religion[a]	.25*	.22*	-.15	.40*
Total	.05	.27*	.28*	.37*

[a]Religion variable is not included in the total minority stress score.
*$p = .05$.

variance was conducted to assess for differences between males and females on each minority stress scaled score. Box's M was nonsignificant with the correction to alpha for unequal sample sizes, $p = .006$, suggesting that these data meet the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were significant, Pillais trace = .42, $F(9, 93) = 7.6$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .42$. Follow-up univariate analysis of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 24. As expected, significant differences were found on the HIV/AIDS subscale between male female sex. Following patterns of significance, Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were primarily in the small range with a moderate effect size (.50) found between male and female sex on the HIV/AIDS subscale.

Second, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to assess for differences between gender categories on each minority stress scaled score. Box's M was nonsignificant with the alpha correction, $p = .006$, suggesting that these data meet the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were significant, Pillais trace = .50, $F(18, 188) = 3.5$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .25$. Follow-up univariate analysis of variance procedures with Sheffe post hoc tests were conducted and presented in Table 24. The Games-Howell correction for violation of homogeneity was used for the post hoc tests for the HIV/AIDS and misunderstanding subscales. Significant differences were found between the male and female gender groups on the HIV/AIDS subscale and between female and other groups on the misunderstanding subscale. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were in the small to moderate range (.05 - .51). As expected, the largest effect sizes (.39 and .51) were found between the male gender and both the female and other

Table 24

Participant Mean Scores (SD) for the Measure ofGay Related Stressors by Sex, Gender, and Sexual Identity

	Male ($n = 30$	Female ($n = 73$	F^a	Male $n = 31$	Female $N = 65$	Other $n = 8$	F^b	Gay/ lesbian	Bisexual	Other	F^b
Family reactions	4.3 (2.2)	4.4 (2.2)	.04	4.4 (2.3)	4.2 (2.1)	5.9 (2.3)	2.2	4.6 (2.2)	4.5 (2.3)	3.7 (2.1)	.98
Reactions to partner	1.6 (.89)	1.9 (1.0)	2.5	1.6 (.91)	1.9 (.94)	2.0 (1.4)	.75	1.6 (.89)	1.9 (.9)	2.1 (1.1)	1.6
Visbility	4.4 (1.3)	4.4 (1.4)	.02	4.4 (1.3)	4.3 (1.4)	5.0 (.93)	91	4.6 (1.2)	4.3 (1.5)	3.8 (1.4)	1.8
Violence and harassment	3.6 (2.1)	3.3 (2.2)	.44	3.6 (2.0)	3.2 (2.2)	4.4 (2.0)	1.4	3.5 (2.0)	3.2 (2.1)	3.3 (2.5)	.19
Misunderstanding	2.8 (.46)	2.8 (.57)	.32	2.8 (.45)	2.7 (.6)	3.0 (0)	1.1	2.8 (.54)	2.9 (.40)	2.6 (.68)	1.6
HIV/AIDS	4.4 (2.3)	2.3 (1.1)	27.4*	4.3 (2.3)	2.2 (1.0)	2.6 (1.6)	13.2*	3.3 (1.9)	2.6 (1.9)	2.4 (1.2)	2.6
Sexual orientation	2.9 (1.3)	3.3 (1.4)	1.2	2.9 (1.3)	3.4 (1.4)	2.5 (1.2)	2.1	3.2 (1.4)	3.2 (1.4)	2.9 (1.5)	.43
Religion**	2.5 (1.7)	2.2 (1.7)	1.3	2.6 (1.7)	2.2 (1.8)	2.4 (1.7)	1.0	2.4 (1.7)	2.2 (1.9)	2.2 (1.5)	.34
Total	18.1 (6.7)	16.2 (5.9)	2.1	18.2 (6.6)	15.8 (5.9)	19.5 (5.3)	2.4	17.6 (5.5)	16.6 (7.0)	14.9 (6.4)	1.4

[a]$df = 1, 101$; [b]$df = 2, 101$; $p < .05$; **Religion variable is not included in the total minority stress score.

group on the HIV/AIDS subscale. Additionally, moderate effect sizes (.27 - .36) were found between the female gender and "other" gender group on the family, visibility, violence/harassment, misunderstanding, sexual orientation conflict and total minority stress subscales.

Third, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to assess for differences between sexual orientation groups on each minority stress scale score. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .37$, suggesting that these data meet the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .18, $F(18, 188) = 1.1$, $p = .41$, $\eta^2 = .09$. While follow-up univariate analyses cannot be interpreted due to nonsignificant results, they are presented in Table 24. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were in the small to moderate range (0 - .29).

Table 25 presents the intercorrelations among the nine subscale scores of the MOGS and continuous sexual orientation history and psychosocial functioning variables. (age one thought, labeled and self-disclosed; degree of disclosure; and psychosocial measure scores). Correlations were in the small-to-moderate range across the age one thought, labeled, and self-disclosed an LGBTQ label, with the strongest moderate negative correlation found between the experience of violence and harassment and the age one thought they may be LGBTQ. Similarly, small-to-moderate correlations were found between the degree of disclosure and the minority stress subscale scores. Moderate correlations exist across minority stress subscale scores with both degree of disclosure to friends and total disclosure. Also, small to moderate correlations were found between the psychosocial measures (RSES and CSE-D) and the minority stress subscale scores with

Table 25

Intercorrelations Between Minority Stress, Sexual Identity History and Psychosocial Characteristics

Characteristics	Family reaction	Reaction Partner	Visibility	Violence/ harrassment	Misunder-standing	HIV/ AIDS	Sexual orientation	Religion	Total
Age									
Age thought	-.20*	.01	-.22*	-.37*	-.24*	-.28*	.10	-.19	-.32*
Age labeled	-.12	.05	-.21*	-.25*	-.26*	-.31*	.32*	-.16	-.17
Age discosed	-.18	-.04	-.14	-.20*	-.29*	-.09	.26*	-.24*	-.16
Disclosure									
Family	.17	.18	.14	.19	.08	.11	-.16	.18	.20
Friends	.39*	.27*	.30*	.23*	.09	.21*	-.31	.14	.34*
Class/work	.31*	.17	.23*	.15	.23	.19*	-.32*	.17	.25
Rel. Comm.	.19	.10	.06	.09	.13	.18	-.21*	.13	.16
Total openness	.29*	.13	.23*	.20*	.19	.30*	-.35*	.14	.27*
Psychosocial									
RSES	.05	.23*	-.01	-.13	.10	.11	-.40*	-.03	-.05
CSED	.13	-.27*	.18	.31*	.06	.19	.34*	.14	.28*

*$p < .05$.

sexual orientation conflict and family reaction to partner being more strongly correlated with both the RSES and CSE-D scores.

Finally, a multivariate analysis of variance was conducted to assess for differences between levels of identity integration on each minority stress scaled score. Box's M was nonsignificant, $p = .49$, suggesting that these data meet the assumption of homoscedasticity. The results of the MANOVA were not significant, Pillais trace = .15, $F(18, 188) = .83$, $p = .66$, $\eta^2 = .07$. While follow-up univariate analyses cannot be interpreted due to nonsignificant results, they are presented in Table 26. Cohen's *d* effect size estimates were generally in the small range.

Table 26

Means (SD) of Minority Stress Scales by Degree of Integration

	Degree of Integration			
	Not at All	Somewhat	Completely	F[a] *(p)*
Family reactions	4.4	4.3	4.5	.08
	(2.8)	(2.2)	(2.3)	*(.92)*
Reactions to	1.8	1.7	2.0	.56
partner	(.92)	(.92)	(1.2)	*(.57)*
Visibility	4.3	4.4	4.4	.21
	(1.5)	(1.2)	(1.4)	*(.81)*
Violence and	3.5	3.4	3.1	.22
harassment	(2.1)	(2.2)	(2.3)	*(.80)*
Misunderstanding	2.7	2.8	2.8	.32
	(.63)	(.44)	(.51)	*(.73)*
HIV/AIDS	3.1	2.7	2.8	.70
	(1.9)	(1.5)	(2.1)	*(.50)*
Sexual orientation	3.5	3.1	2.7	2.1
Conflict	(1.4)	(1.5)	(1.1)	*(.13)*
Religion	2.1	2.4	2.5	.32
	(1.6)	(1.7)	(2.0)	*(.73)*
Total	17.4	16.4	16.4	.31
	(6.3)	(5.6)	(7.2)	*(.74)*

[a]*df = 2, 101.*

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

As nearly 60% of youth say religion is an important facet in their lives (Rosario et al., 2006), the social context of religion emerges as an important milieu for adolescent sexual development (Rostosky et al., 2007). Though recent research has suggested the importance of examining the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience in relation to various contextual variables, little research has considered the experience of the sexual minority individuals within religious contexts. The purpose of the current study was to examine and describe the religious contexts of sexual minority adolescents and young adults; their relation to demographic information, psychosocial outcomes and sexual orientation; the experience of sexual identity and religious identity integration; and the relationship between sexual minority adolescent religious experiences and reported minority stress.

In the current sample, findings suggest sexual minority adolescents and young adults tend to experience religious and sexual identity conflict, and during the process of identity development many choose to disidentify with religion and/or describe themselves as more spiritual. While many LGBTQ adolescents and young adults do not frequently experience being LGBTQ and religious concurrently, individual factors such as self-acceptance and increased knowledge are instrumental in successful religious and sexual identity integration. Finally, sexual minority adolescents and young adults who maintain high degree of positive religious experiences, self-identify earlier and/or are more "out" regarding their sexual orientation may experience more minority stress.

Sexual Orientation Histories

Recent research regarding sexual identity development and disclosure was supported by the data from the current sample. First, some researchers have observed that many people choose not to self-label and/or feel the fluidity of their sexual attractions does not easily compartmentalize into a single expression (Bernal & Coolhart, 2005; Diamond, 2005, Savin-Williams, 2005). Reflective of these findings, 19% of the participants in the current sample classified their sexual orientation with labels other than gay/lesbian or bisexual. Likewise, 8% of the sample described their gender with labels other than male or female. Secondly, the ages of considering, adopting, and disclosing a LGBTQ label in the current sample were consistent with recent research literature, suggesting that adolescents are self-identifying and disclosing at earlier ages, often during middle and late adolescence (Savin-Williams). Third, sexual minority adolescents have also been found to self-disclose to friends prior to family members (Savin-Williams). Similarly, the current sample reported being more out to friends than family, and reported the lowest disclosure to religious groups. Despite the use of a convenience sample, these statistics suggest some congruency with previous research using LGBTQ samples.

Question One: Religious Experiences of Sexual Minority Youth

One purpose of this study was to gain descriptive data on sexual minority adolescent and young adult religious experiences. Consistent with large U.S. national

samples, the majority of the participants reported a Christian religious affiliation while growing up (Statistical Abstract of the United States, 2007). In contrast, currently over one half of the participants reported no religious affiliation. A consistent rate of apostasy was found across sex, gender, and sexual orientation. Sexual minority adolescents and young adults tend to disidentify with religion across the developmental process of identity development. These findings from the current sample are consistent with both Rosser's (1991) and Sherkat's (2002) research. Thus, the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience of religious disidentification mirrors that which has been documented in LGBTQ adult samples. Developmentally, late adolescents and young adults, regardless of sexual identification, tend to decrease their own religious participation during this developmental period. Future research should consider the differences between rates of religious disidentification of sexual minority adolescents and young adults in comparison to heterosexual individuals using consistent measures of religiosity and/or spirituality.

Secondly, reported religious and sexual identity conflict provides a broader understanding of the sexual minority adolescent and young adult religious experience. In the current study, nearly two thirds of the participants noted some degree of conflict, consistent with Schuck and Liddle's (2001) findings. The current findings suggest sexual minority adolescent and young adult religious affiliation while coming out is related to degree of reported conflict. Specifically, sexual minority individuals who belonged to more nonaffirming religious traditions experienced more conflict than those who were members of welcoming or LGB-affirming religious groups. These findings align

logically with the theological teachings of the represented religious denominations. Also, as expected, those who reported no religious affiliation were more likely to report no conflict. Interestingly, one third of the participants with no religious affiliation reported some-to-extreme conflict with their religious identity. This may be due to the social structure of religion and the communal nature of religious participation. Individuals who have disidentified with religion personally may still experience conflict due to social pressure, including family and friend religious involvement. Additionally, individuals who do not identify with religion may struggle with unanswered existential questions that may influence the experience of conflict and/or strain. As this research was retrospective in nature, future research could consider the experience of religious conflict throughout the process of self-identification (awareness, self-labeling, and disclosure) to develop a wider understanding of this potentially chaotic experience for sexual minority adolescents, albeit longitudinal research of this nature would be extremely difficult.

Third, the BMMRS provides a multidimensional picture of the religious experience of sexual minority adolescents and young adults. As expected, differences that emerged existed between the agnostic/atheist/none group and the three religiously affiliated groups on the majority of the subscales. However, no differences were found between groups on the spirituality subscale. Additionally, regardless of one's reported religious affiliation, participants consistently rated themselves as more spiritual than religious. Regardless of sexual orientation, research with adolescent and young adult samples have found similar findings, a propensity to grow in one's spirituality during the identity-forming processes of adolescence and either reject or decrease one's religious

participation (Engebretson, 2004; Markstrom, 1999). While the current study used only one self-report measure of spirituality, future research might more concretely define and measure the LGBTQ experiences of spirituality and religiosity.

Finally, the measure of religious comfort and strain enriches our understanding of the religious experience of sexual minority adolescents and young adults. As may be expected, those in welcoming faith traditions reported more religious comfort than those who identified as agnostic or atheist. However, the difference between the welcoming and LGB-affirming groups on religious comfort is interesting. Findings from the current sample suggest that sexual minority individuals involved in welcoming faith denominations report a more positive relationship with God and experience more benefits from their faith than those in LGB-affirming faith traditions. This may be due to theological differences in the understanding of God's nature and differences in the communal aspect of the respective religious traditions. For example, sexual minority individuals from welcoming faith traditions may experience a less accepting communal faith environment, and thus emphasize their own relationship with God in their faith journey. Likewise, sexual minority individuals in LGB-affirming traditions may be more likely to view God as a social example, thus experiencing increased positive social interactions within the faith community and emphasize both items related to religious comfort (positive relationship with God and benefits of the faith) and religious community.

However, most participants reported moderate levels of religious comfort, even those in nonaffirming religious denominations. Also, the lack of difference in religious

strain by current religious grouping is of interest. Reports of religious strain were relatively low for all religious affiliation groups, suggesting that sexual minority adolescents and young adults are not generally burdened by the perception of a punitive and condemning God or faith community. Of the religious strain subscales, the social negative subscale was more salient in the current sample, suggesting sexual minority young adults experience more negative social interactions surrounding religion than preoccupation with their own sin or guilt and/or experiencing negative emotions towards God. This finding supports research by Rostosky and colleagues (2007) that suggested that attitudes and teachings within religious organizations work to sever the social support experienced by LGBTQ adolescents and young adults. Thus, the conflict experienced and reported by LGBTQ individuals seems to lie more within the social, communal realm than with their own spirituality or relationship with God.

While the current study used a number of different measures to assess the construct "religion," future research must consider additional conceptualizations of adolescent and young adult religiosity, spirituality, and religious contexts to facilitate a broader understanding of the sexual minority adolescent religious experience. This may be through a qualitative methodology but could also be facilitated through alternate operationalizations of both religiosity and/or spirituality.

Question Two: Religious Experiences and Demographic Data, Sexual Identity Histories and Psychosocial Outcomes

A second purpose of the current study was to consider the differences in religious experiences by demographic information, sexual identity histories and psychosocial outcomes. In general, sexual minority adolescents and young adults have similar religious experiences across demographic markers, sexual identity histories and psychosocial outcomes, with a few exceptions. Schuck and Liddle (2001) hypothesized homophobic preachers forced an early awareness of one's own sexuality in LGB adolescents, as they found LGB-individuals who experienced religious conflict self-identified earlier than those who did not report conflict. Similarly, the findings of the current sample suggest sexual minority individuals who report more negative individual and/or negative communal religious experiences considered an LGBTQ label at an earlier age than those with less negative individual and/or negative communal religious experiences.

Additionally, participants in the current sample who reported higher current levels of positive individual religious experiences, noting a more positive relationship and/or partnership with God disclosed an LGBTQ label at an earlier age. Similarly, Rostosky and colleagues' (2007) found an increased protective benefit of religion with earlier age of self-identification. As these individuals have had a longer time to "wrestle" with their sexual and religious identities, they may have more fully integrated their identities, enabling them to have positive religious experiences. Consistent with the process of

identity development, sexual minority individuals increase their own self-awareness and experience of integration with the passage of time. Finally, as might be expected, sexual minority adolescents and young adults whom have a more intense preoccupation with their own sin, or feel abandoned by God have lower self-esteem scores and higher levels of depressive symptoms. These individuals may tend to be more rigid in their understanding of God, and may exhibit symptoms of scrupulosity. While no differences were found between the psychosocial measures and different religious affiliations, more research is needed to understand the factors related to the increased negative religious experiences in an attempt to counteract this finding.

Question Three: Religious Experiences and Sexual Identity Integration

Previous research with LGBTQ individuals has suggested the religious context may complicate the process of identity development (Schuck & Liddle, 2001). Thus, another purpose of the current study was to aid in the understanding of religious and sexual identity integration. While many sexual minority individuals choose to leave their religious affiliations, some LGBTQ late adolescents and young adults stay active within their religious groups, and may experience increased tension and conflict. An understanding of factors that aide integration may provide knowledge of not only religion's beneficial influence as suggested by Rosario and colleagues (2006), but also the possible avenues by which these sexual minority individuals can seek to alleviate the experienced tension.

Consistent with current religious affiliation reports, findings from the current sample suggest sexual minority adolescents do not report a high degree of sexual and religious identity integration. Additionally, sexual minority adolescents and young adults do not frequently experience being concurrently LGBTQ and religious, with over half of the current sample never having such experience(s). Rather, sexual minority adolescents have a propensity to describe themselves as spiritual than religious and/or have no religious identity.

Of those who do integrate their religious and sexual identities, certain factors were reported instrumental in integration. The two most frequently indicated factors represent processes that happen at a personal level. First, two thirds of the subsample stated that accepting one's self and having a sense of completeness aided in integration. The diffusion of the tension between the different identities may have emerged as participants viewed God as someone who made them to be LGBTQ. Another factor important to one half of the subsample was the participant's own increase in knowledge, biblical and/or religious readings. This may allow participants to gain new perspectives that further aid identity integration. Additional factors instrumental in identity integration for over one third of the subsample included both the support of family and friends as well as spiritual reasons. One's own spirituality and existence of a supporting faith community were also highlighted in the participant's experiential descriptions. Thus, the process of successful identity integration between the religious and sexual identities for sexual minority adolescents likely occurs on a personal, individual level albeit complimented by social support.

In relation to their sexual self-identification, sexual minority adolescents and young adults appear likely to report changes in their religious participation. A shift was observed towards no religious affiliation. Thirty-five percent of participants attributed their disidentification or lack of attendance to their sexual identification. Developmentally, adolescents and young adults regardless of sexual orientation have a propensity to reduce or discontinue religious participation. More research is needed to understand the processes of religious disidentification and differences in rates of apostasy for LGBTQ, as compared to heterosexual adolescents and young adults. For sexual minority young adults, this trend towards disidentification may be an adaptive, health-promoting move for people whose faith communities are condemning and/or nonaccepting. As sexual minority individuals in the current study chose to consider themselves more spiritual rather than religious, and/or reinterpret religious teachings, such a move from religious organizations to self-seeking may further enhance their own process of identity integration.

Finally, as may be expected, sexual minority adolescents and young adults who had somewhat or completely integrated their religious and sexual identities reported more positive individual religious experiences. If a sexual minority adolescent or young adult has at least some religious and sexual identity integration, they are more likely to experience increased positive feelings towards God, and belief in a partnership with God. However, complete integration of one's sexual and religious identities is needed to bypass the negative experiences of religion as only sexual minority individuals who felt they had completely integrated their religious and sexual identities reported less

resentment and feelings of abandonment from God. Without full integration, sexual minority individuals may live in tension and conflict, which may be only negated by complete integration of one's religious and sexual identities or perhaps complete disidentification. When living in the grey area, individuals with some but not complete integration seem more prone to experiencing both the positive and negative aspects of the religious experience.

Future research could consider using alternate research methodology to consider the experience of identity integration for sexual minority adolescents and young adults. First, the use of longitudinal methodology to consider changes in religious and sexual identity integration throughout the identity development process could facilitate an enriched understanding of the process across developmental milestones. Additionally, qualitative methodology may provide a deeper understanding of the factors influencing integration and/or decision to disidentify with religion.

Question Four: Religious Experiences and Minority Stress

The religious context may be experienced as difficult and discriminatory due to theological claims and organization structure, and the construct of minority stress offers an additional understanding of the sexual minority adolescent and young adult experience of religion. As recent researchers have urged future study on the relationship of minority stress to a wide variety of variables (Lewis et al., 2003; Meyer, 2003), another purpose of the current study was to explore LGBTQ religious experiences in relation to reported

minority stress. Findings from the current sample suggest sexual minority adolescents and young adults experience low-to-moderate levels of minority stress, consistent across both childhood and current religious affiliation. While there were no differences by current affiliation, sexual minority adolescents and young adults who belonged to a nonaffirming religious tradition, while coming out reported more religious-related minority stress currently than those who did not have a religious affiliation while coming out. Religious affiliation while coming out may impact the experience of religious-related minority stress for sexual minority adolescents and young adults. Logically, this discrepancy reflects the religious tension that may occur in the midst of self-identification. An adolescent's coming out religious affiliation, particularly a nonaffirming theological position, may better encapsulate the religious conflict and experiences of stress than current religious affiliation. As the religious-related minority stress subscale was created for the current study, future research could further develop the construct and measurement of religious-related minority stress.

Secondly, sexual minority individuals who report a difficult relationship with god or negative perceptions and experiences with the organized church community also are more likely to experience multiple types of minority stress. These adolescents and young adults not only experience an increase of religiously related minority stress, but also report increased levels of stress associated with their family lives, experience of violence, internal conflict, and the community. This may be due to both increased visibility and forced confrontation of the conflict between religion and an LGBTQ sexual identity, which sexual minority adolescents and young adults may experience as they pursue

religious experiences. However, additional research is needed to adequately describe the moderating variables associated with the relationship between negative religious experiences and reported minority stress.

Finally, results from the current study suggest for sexual minority individuals who consider, label or adopt an LGBTQ label early, there is an increase of experienced minority stress, particularly in the form of violence and harassment, misunderstanding regarding one's own sexual orientation and/or personal conflict over one's sexual identity. As these individuals have considered their sexual identity longer, they may be more open about their sexual identity and may experience more minority stress as a result of homophobia and misunderstanding. Specifically, the more open a sexual minority adolescent or young adult is regarding their sexual orientation, the greater the likelihood they will disclose their sexual orientation to individuals who hold discriminatory and negative views of same-sex attraction and relationships. As might be expected, sexual minority adolescents who have heightened levels of internal conflict regarding their sexual and religious identities also report lower levels of self-esteem and increased depressive symptomology. These findings are consistent with human nature; if individuals are uncomfortable with aspects of their personality or identity, symptoms of both depression and/or anxiety may accompany the experience of conflict and tension. However, LGBTQ adolescents and young adults who reported experiencing minority stress related to violence/harassment also report higher levels of depressive symptoms, suggesting that the links between minority stress and depressive symptoms involve both personal and communal components.

Interestingly, in the current sample a moderate negative correlation between the minority stress subscale, family reactions to partner, and depressive symptoms was found. These findings suggest that sexual minority adolescents and individuals whom experience stress related to introducing a partner to their family members have lower levels of depressive symptoms. In order to have experienced this type of minority stress (family reaction to partner), the sexual minority individual would have had to experience a relationship where they would have introduced their partner to their family. As 25% of participants had never disclosed to their family members and 54% reported disclosing to either no or a few family members, these factors may have confounded these results. Additionally, sexual minority adolescents and young adults who are in committed relationships, introducing their partner to their families, may actually exhibit lower levels of depressive symptomology due to a sense of fulfillment despite the experience of stress related to family reactions to their partner.

Summary and Limitations

While research with sexual minority adolescent and young adult populations is difficult due to adequate population sampling, and the sensitive nature of maintaining an LGBTQ identity, understanding LGBTQ identity development within various contexts is necessary. This study provides additional insight into the sexual minority adolescent and young adult religious experience. As nearly two thirds of sexual minority individuals noted conflict between their religious and sexual identities, the religious context can be difficult for sexual minority individuals. To "deal" with the apparent conflict, many

sexual minority adolescents and young adults choose to disidentify with religion, which may be a healthy and adaptive step towards identity development. For those who do stay active in religious organizations, the process of sexual and religious identity integration occurs largely on an individual level. Reinterpreting religious teachings and focusing on one's own spirituality and relationship with God proved instrumental in the successful integration of religious and sexual identities. Finally, for sexual minority individuals who have increased negative religious experiences, self-identify earlier and/or are more "open" with their sexual identity, there is an accompanied increase of minority stress.

There are several limitations to the current study. The first and primary limitation to the study was the use of a convenience sample in recruiting participants. The recruitment strategy involved reliance on LGBTQ-center directors to aid in recruitment of survey participants. As many of the LGBTQ-center directors were representing college and/or university communities, it is likely the survey participants do not adequately represent the population of sexual minority adolescents and young adults. Additionally, the individuals who completed the survey may have a heightened interest in LGBTQ concerns and religious experiences, as the survey was lengthy and required a motivated interest to complete.

Secondly, when defining and measuring the term "religion," one attempts to put limitations on a construct founded in both omniscience and mystery. While the current study moved beyond using only religious affiliation in its definition of the religious construct, future research must consider additional conceptualizations of adolescent religiosity and religious contexts to facilitate a broader understanding of the sexual

minority adolescent religious experience. Additionally, the religious affiliation groupings were created using current theological positions and/or statements regarding LGB attractions and/or behaviors. As denominational positions may have changed throughout participants' childhood and coming out processes, interpretations are tentative for the LGB-affirming and welcoming childhood and coming out religious affiliations. Also, while particular denominations may have adopted "official" positions on LGB concerns, not every individual congregation or faith community strictly adheres to such statements.

Third, the religious minority stress subscale measure was created for the current study. As a result, conclusions are tentative and should be interpreted with caution. Additionally, due to low Cronbach's alphas, some subscales on the established measures were modified or not included in the analyses. As a result, future research should seek to correct inconsistencies prior to utilization or use better-established measures of the similar constructs.

Finally, the anonymous survey methodology was selected to ensure that participants were comfortable disclosing personal aspects of their sexual orientation and religious histories. However, targeting a young adult population in this manner resulted in retrospective accounts of religious experiences during childhood and early adolescence.

Of course, longitudinal work that addresses the interacting influences of developmental contexts over time will be necessary to further delineate the role of religious experiences in shaping sexual identity development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A:

Recruitment Letter

Why am I getting this email?

Hello! My name is Angie Dahl and I am a master's student at Utah State University. I am working with Dr. Renee Galliher, psychology professor at USU, and we would like to invite you to participate in a research study designed to explore the experiences of same-sex attracted adolescents and young adults. We are both active in affirming the LGBTQ community and hope that our research can be used to further support LGBTQ persons. The goal of our research is to develop a better understanding of the religious experiences of LGBTQ adolescents and young adults ages 18-22. We invite you to participate in our study if you have some degree of same-sex attraction, regardless of self-identification (gay, lesbian, bisexual, questioning, transgender, intersex, etc.). You do not have to be religious to participate in the study, and all types of religious affiliations are welcome to participate.

What would I have to do?

Your participation would involve completing an anonymous online survey about your sexual identification and religious experiences. This should take you between 25-45 minutes. There are 176 questions in the survey. All survey responses will be confidential and anonymous.

What is in it for me?

You may choose to submit your email address to be entered into a drawing for one of ten $50 prizes given away in March 2008. Email addresses for the drawing will be held in a separate database, and survey responses will not be traceable to specific email addresses. In addition, you can choose to receive a summary of the study results by email.

If you have any questions about the research, please do not hesitate to contact me, Angie Dahl at 435-740-0693 or at angiedahl@gmail.com. You may also contact my faculty advisor, Renee V. Galliher, Ph.D. at (435) 797-3391 or Renee.Galliher@usu.edu. Thanks!

To participate, please follow the link below:

https://www.psychdata.com/s.asp?SID=122361

Appendix B:

Letter of Information

WEB SURVEY: Letter of Information

The Religious Experience of Sexual Minority Youth:

Identity, Integration and Minority Stress

Introduction/Purpose: Angie Dahl, a master's student in the Department of Psychology at Utah State University, and Dr. Renee Galliher are in charge of this research study. We invite you to be part of this study. We are both active in supporting the GLBTQ community. We hope that our research can be used to further support GLBTQ persons. The goal of our research is to understand the religious experiences of GLBTQ adolescents and young adults. About 100 sexual minority participants ages 18-22 will complete this research study.

Procedures: Your participation includes completing an online survey. Questions would require responses about your sexual self-identification and religious experiences. This should take you between 25-40 minutes. All survey responses will be confidential. Responses will be collected into a database, which will be downloaded and scored by members of our research team.

Risks: In this study, there is some risk of feeling uncomfortable. Some individuals may not want to share personal information with researchers. You can choose not to answer survey questions if you find yourself feeling uncomfortable.

Benefits: We hope that you will find this study to be interesting. Your information will help us gain a better understanding of the religious experiences of sexual minority individuals. In addition, it will aid us in further supporting the GLBTQ community.

Explanation and Offer to Answer Questions: If you have any questions, please contact Angie Dahl at (435) 740-0693 or at adahl@cc.usu.edu. You can also ask the Primary Investigator, Professor Renee Galliher at (435) 797-3391.

Payment: When you finish this research, you will have the option to submit your email address for a prize drawing. The drawing will be held March 2008 for one of ten $50 prizes. You have the option to enter this drawing upon completion of the final question of this survey. You will be taken to a new webpage where you can enter your email address. Clicking the "submit" button at the bottom of the page will enter you (via email address) into the drawing. Email addresses will be stored in a separate database. Survey answers will not be linked to your email address. All information is confidential.

Voluntary Nature of Participation and Right to Withdraw without Consequences: Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary. You can refuse to be involved or stop without penalty.

Confidentiality: Consistent with federal and state rules, all responses will be kept private. Angie Dahl, Dr. Galliher, and research assistants are the only individuals whom will be able to see the data. All information will be kept in a secured database. Your answers will only have an ID number assigned. Your name and email address (if provided) will not be linked to your answers. Additionally, it will be impossible to identify your computer. Your identifying information will **not** be used in any report about this research. If you choose to submit your email address online for the cash drawing, the information will be stored in a separate database. A letter with general results of the study can be provided when the research has been completed if desired. At the end of the survey, you will be prompted to provide an e-mail address to which we will send the results. This information will not be linked to any of your survey answers. If you are randomly selected to win prize money, you will be contacted to obtain a mailing address for prize disbursement. After the prize money has been awarded, all email and mailing addresses will be destroyed. Data from this study may be used for three years by our research team before it is destroyed.

IRB Approval Statement: The Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects at Utah State University has approved this research project. If you have any questions regarding IRB approval of this study, you can contact the IRB administrator at (435)797-1821.

Copy of Consent: Please print a copy of this informed consent for your files.

Investigator Statement: I certify that the research study has been presented to the participant by me or my research staff. The individual has been given the opportunity to ask questions about the nature and purpose, the possible risks and benefits associated with participation in the study.

PI and Student Researcher:

Renee V. Galliher, Ph.D., Principal Investigator Angie Dahl, Student Researcher

Participant Consent:
If you have read and understand the above statements, please click on the "CONTINUE" button below. This indicates your consent to participate in this study.

Thank you very much for your participation! Your assistance is truly appreciated.

Appendix C:

Resources and Referrals

List of National Resources and Referrals

QueerAmerica- www.queeramerica.com

With over 5,000 entries, it's the largest collection of queer resources in the nation, and includes information on community centers, support organizations, PFLAG (Parents, Families & Friends of Lesbians And Gays) chapters, queer youth groups, and more. You can enter your zip code and gain information on community resources.

OutProud- www.outproud.com

Website of the National Coalition for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Youth. Offers discussion forums, a library, and many other resources for support and/or information.

Youth Resource- www.youthresource.com

Offers the ability to search by state to find local resources, message boards, and additional educational and supportive resources.

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network- www.gslen.org

A website of the national network which works to ensure safe schools for all youth, regardless of sexual orientation. Offers educational resources, news information, links for students in creation and support of gay-straight alliances.

Appendix D:

Results Summary

The Religious Experience of Sexual Minority Youth: Identity, Integration & Minority Stress

Utah State University

Why this study was important

How this study was conducted

Who participated

Religious Experiences

Integration of Sexual and Religious Identities

Experiences of Minority Stress

Appendix E:

Measures

Demographic Information

1. What is your biological sex?
    a. Male
    b. Female

What is your gender?
a. Male
b. Female
c. Other *(please specify)*_____

2. What is your age? _____

3. Which category best describes your racial/ethnic background?
    a. Latino/a
    b. African American
    c. Caucasian
    d. Asian/Pacific Islander
    e. American Indian
    f. Bi-racial/Multi-racial
    g. Other: *(please specify)*
    _____

4. How do you currently describe your sexual orientation:
    a. Gay
    b. Bisexual
    c. Lesbian
    d. Transgendered
    e. Questioning
    f. Heterosexual
    g. Other: *(please specify)*
    _____

5. With whom do you live?
    a. Parent(s)
    b. Friends/roommates
    c. Romantic partner
    d. Alone
    e. With other family members
    f. Other: *(please specify)*
    _____

6. How would you describe the community you grew up in?
    a. Rural *(country)*
    b. Urban *(city)*
    c. Suburban *(subdivisions)*

7. What is your current religious affiliation, if any?
    a. LDS
    b. Episcopalian
    c. Lutheran
    d. Catholic
    e. Baptist
    f. Methodist
    g. Atheist
    h. Agnostic
    i. Hindu
    j. Buddhist
    k. Jewish
    l. Muslim
    m. None
    n. Other: *(please specify)*
    _____

8. Current educational classification:
    a. Still in high school
    b. High school degree
    c. Some college
    d. College graduate
    e. Other: *(please specify)*
    _____

Sexual Orientation History

"GLBTQ" is a terms used to describe those who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or questioning. For the purposes of this survey, it includes those who report some level of same-sex attractions or engage in same-sex sexual behavior.

1. How old were you when you first thought you were GLBTQ?
   _____Age
   _____ Do not consider myself GLBTQ

2. How old were you when you first labeled yourself GLBTQ?
   _____Age
   _____ Do not consider myself GLBTQ

3. How old were you when you first told someone you were GLBTQ?
   _____Age
   _____ Do not consider myself GLBTQ

4. To what degree have you disclosed your sexual orientation *(told others you were gay/lesbian/bisexual/questioning)*:

	None	*A Few*	*Some*	*A lot*	*Everyone*
Immediate Family	1	2	3	4	5
Friends	1	2	3	4	5
Classmates/Coworkers	1	2	3	4	5
People with whom you are religiously affiliated	1	2	3	4	5

5. Overall, what degree are you "open" regarding your sexual orientation:
   a. I have not told anyone about my sexual orientation
   b. I have told less than half of the people about my sexual orientation
   c. I have told more than half of the people about my sexual orientation
   d. I am totally open about my sexual orientation

Measure of Gay Related Stressors (MOGS)
(Lewis et al., 2001)

Which of the following have you experienced in the last year? Answer by circling Y for YES or N for NO.

1. Rejection by my family members due to my sexual orientation. Y N
2. Lack of understanding by my family about my sexual orientation. Y N
3. Distance between me and my family due to my sexual orientation. Y N
4. Lack of support from my family members due to my sexual orientation. Y N
5. An overzealous interest in my sexual orientation by my family. Y N
6. Rejection by my brothers and sisters. Y N
7. A feeling that my family tolerates rather than accepts my sexual orientation. Y N
8. The fact that my family ignores my sexual orientation. Y N
9. Talking with some of my relatives about my sexual orientation. Y N
10. Introducing a new partner to my family. Y N
11. Having my lover/partner and my family in the same place or the same time. Y N
12. An unwillingness of my family to accept my partner. Y N
13. Keeping my orientation secret from family and friends. Y N
14. Expectation from family and friends who do not know I am gay/lesbian/bisexual for me to date (and marry) someone of the opposite sex. Y N
15. Hiding my sexual orientation from others. Y N
16. Rejection when I tell about my sexual orientation. Y N
17. Telling straight friends about my sexual orientation. Y N
18. Loss of friends due to my sexual orientation. Y N
19. Having straight friends know about my sexual orientation. Y N
20. Dating someone who is openly gay. Y N
21. Having people at school/work find out that I am gay/lesbian/bisexual. Y N
22. Rumors about me due to my sexual orientation. Y N

23. Being in public with groups of gay/lesbian/bisexual people. Y N
24. Being "exposed" as a gay/lesbian/bisexual person. Y N
25. Image of homosexuals created by some visible, vocal gays and lesbians Y N
26. Threat of violence due to my sexual orientation. Y N
27. Physical assault due to my sexual orientation. Y N
28. A need to be careful to avoid having anti-homosexual violence directed at me. Y N
29. Fear that I will be attacked due to my sexual orientation. Y N
30. Possibility that there will be violence when I'm out with a group of gay/lesbian or bisexual people. Y N
31. Harassment due to my sexual orientation. Y N
32. Being called names due to my sexual orientation. Y N
33. Some people's ignorance about gay/lesbian and bisexual people. Y N
34. Lack of acceptance of gay/lesbian/bisexual people in society. Y N
35. Lack of constitutional guarantee of rights due to my sexual orientation. Y N
36. Potential job loss due to my sexual orientation. Y N
37. Loss of job due to sexual orientation. Y N
38. Working or going to school in a homophobic environment. Y N
39. Harassment at school/work due to my sexual orientation. Y N
40. Lack of security because I am gay/lesbian/bisexual. Y N
41. Inability to get some jobs because I am gay/lesbian/bisexual. Y N
42. A feeling that I must prove myself at school/work because of my sexual orientation. Y N
43. Mental health discrimination due to sexual orientation. Y N
44. Housing discrimination due to my sexual orientation. Y N
45. Discrimination in social services due to my sexual orientation. Y N
46. Need to exercise caution when dating due to AIDS/HIV. Y N
47. Constantly having to think about "safe sex." Y N

48. Limits that I have placed on sexual activity due to AIDS/HIV. Y N
49. Fear that I might get HIV or AIDS. Y N
50. Difficulty meeting people due to concern over HIV/AIDS. Y N
51. Difficulty finding someone to love. Y N
52. Fear that my friends may be at risk for HIV/AIDS. Y N
53. Shame and guilt because I am gay/lesbian/bisexual. Y N
54. Difficulty accepting my sexual orientation. Y N
55. Mixed feelings about my sexual orientation. Y N
56. Conflict between myself and the image people have about gay/lesbian and bisexual people. Y N

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Please use the scale below to respond to the following statements.

1 Strongly agree	**2** Agree	**3** Disagree	**4** Strongly disagree

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.	1	2	3	4
2. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.	1	2	3	4
3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.	1	2	3	4
4. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.	1	2	3	4
5. I am able to do things as well as most other people.	1	2	3	4
6. I wish I could have more respect for myself.	1	2	3	4
7. I take a positive attitude toward myself.	1	2	3	4
8. I certainly feel useless at times.	1	2	3	4
9. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.	1	2	3	4
10. At times I think I am no good at all.	1	2	3	4

CES-D

INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONS: **Below is a list of the ways you might have felt or behaved. Please indicate how often you have felt or behaved this way during the past week. Please use the scale below to respond to the following statements.**

1	2	3	4
Never	*1-2 days*	*3-4 days*	*5-7 days*

During the past week:

1.	I was bothered by things that usually don't bother me.	1	2	3	4
2.	I did not feel like eating; my appetite was poor.	1	2	3	4
3.	I felt that I could not shake off the blues even with the help of my family and friends.	1	2	3	4
4.	I felt that I was just as good as other people.	1	2	3	4
5.	I had trouble keeping my mind on what I was doing.	1	2	3	4
6.	I felt depressed.	1	2	3	4
7.	I felt that everything I did was an effort.	1	2	3	4
8.	I felt hopeful about the future.	1	2	3	4
9.	I thought my life had been a failure.	1	2	3	4
10.	I felt fearful.	1	2	3	4
11.	My sleep was restless.	1	2	3	4
12.	I was happy.	1	2	3	4
13.	I talked less than usual.	1	2	3	4

14. I felt lonely.	1	2	3	4
15. People were unfriendly.	1	2	3	4
16. I enjoyed life.	1	2	3	4
17. I had crying spells.	1	2	3	4
18. I felt sad.	1	2	3	4
19. I felt that people disliked me.	1	2	3	4
20. I could not get "going."	1	2	3	4

Religious Experience

1. What was your childhood religious affiliation?

a. LDS
b. Episcopalian
c. Lutheran
d. Catholic
e. Baptist
f. Methodist
g. Atheist
h. Agnostic
i. Hindu
j. Buddhist
k. Jewish
l. Muslim
m. None
n. Other: *(please specify)*

_____

2. If you have self-identified as a sexual minority: What was your religious affiliation while "coming out"?

a. LDS
b. Episcopalian
c. Lutheran
d. Catholic
e. Baptist
f. Methodist
g. Atheist
h. Agnostic
i. Hindu
j. Buddhist
k. Jewish
l. Muslim
m. None
n. Other: *(please specify)*

_____

3. Which of the following best describes your experience with religion while coming out:

a. I didn't/haven't experienced any conflict

b. I experienced minor conflict, but it did not bother me much

c. I am/was somewhat conflicted about my sexual identity and religious beliefs and/or experiences

d. I am/was conflicted regarding my sexual identity and religious beliefs and/or experiences

e. I am/was extremely conflicted regarding my sexual identity and religious beliefs and/or experiences

4. To what degree did your family emphasize religion while growing up:

a. High- Went to services most Sundays, and/or engaged as a family in religious activities at least once per week.

b. Moderate- Went to services about half the time, and/or engaged in some religious activities as a family while growing up.

c. Low- Went to services and/or participated in family religious activities during special occasions.

d. None- My family was not religious.

Religious Comfort and Strain Scale
Ann M. Yali & Julie J. Exline (revised 2007)

People report a wide variety of experiences in their religious and spiritual lives. Please rate the degree to which you are currently having each of the experiences listed below.

To what extent do you currently: *(0 = not at all; 10 = Extremely)*

1. Trust God to protect and care for you . . . . . .
2. Feel resentment toward others in your religious group . . . . . .
3. Feel angry at God . . . . . .
4. Find that your beliefs give you a sense of meaning or purpose. . . . . ..
5. Fear that religious people will condemn you for your mistakes . . . . . .
6. Believe that God sees you as a bad person . . . . . .
7. See God's actions as unfair . . . . . .
8. See your beliefs as a source of strength . . . . . .
9. Feel that God has let you down . . . . . .
10. Fear that God will condemn you for your mistakes . . . . . .
11. Believe that sin has caused your problems . . . .
12. View God as unkind . . . . . .
13. See your faith as a source of peace and harmony . . . . . .
14. Feel energized by your faith . . . . . .
15. View God as all-powerful and all-knowing . . . . . .
16. Have bad memories of past experiences with religion/rel. people...
17. Feel excessive guilt about your sins and mistakes . . . . . .
18. Find that your religion/spirituality gives you peace of mind . . . . . .
19. Believe that God disapproves of you . . . .
20. Feel loved by God . . . . . .
21. Feel supported by God . . . . . .
22. Feel nurtured or cared for by God . . . . . .
23. Feel abandoned by God . . . . . .
24. Believe that you have committed a sin too big to be forgiven . . . . . .

Modified Brief Multidimensional Measure of Religousness/Spirituality (Fetzer, 1999)

Daily Spiritual Experiences

The following questions deal with possible spiritual experiences. To what extent can you say you experience the following:

1. I feel God's presence.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

2. I find strength and comfort in my religion.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

3. I feel deep inner peace or harmony.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

4. I desire to be closer to or in union with God.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

5. I feel God's love for me, directly, or through others.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

6. I am spiritually touched by the beauty of creation.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

Values/Beliefs

7. I believe in a God who watches over me.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

8. I feel a deep sense of responsibility for reducing pain and suffering in the world.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

Foregiveness

9. I have forgiven myself for things that I have done wrong.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

10. I have forgiven those who hurt me.
   1 - Many times a day
   2 - Every day
   3 - Most days
   4 - Some days
   5 - Once in a while
   6 - Never or almost never

11. I know that God forgives me.
   1 - Always or almost always
   2 - Often
   3 - Seldom
   4 - Never

Private Religious Practices

12. How often do you pray privately in places other than at church or synagogue?
   1 - More than once a day
   2 - Once a day
   3 - A few times a week
   4 - Once a week
   5 - A few times a month
   6 - Once a month
   7 - Less than once a month
   8 - Never

13. Within your religious or spiritual tradition, how often do you meditate?
   1 - More than once a day
   2 - Once a day
   3 - A few times a week
   4 - Once a week
   5 - A few times a month
   6 - Once a month
   7 - Less than once a month
   8 - Never

14. How often do you watch or listen to religious programs on TV or radio?
   1 - More than once a day
   2 - Once a day
   3 - A few times a week
   4 - Once a week
   5 - A few times a month
   6 - Once a month
   7 - Less than once a month
   8 - Never

15. How often do you read the Bible or other religious literature?
   1 - More than once a day
   2 - Once a day
   3 - A few times a week
   4 - Once a week
   5 - A few times a month
   6 - Once a month
   7 - Less than once a month
   8 - Never

16. How often are prayers or grace said before or after meals in your home?
   1 - At all meals
   2 - Once a day
   3 - At least once a week
   4 - Only on special occasions
   5 - Never

Religious and Spiritual Coping

Think about how you try to understand and deal with major problems in your life. To what extent is each of the following involved in the way you cope?

17. I think about how my life is part of a larger spiritual force.
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Quite a bit
    3 - Somewhat
    4 - Not at all

18. I work together with God as partners.
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Quite a bit
    3 - Somewhat
    4 - Not at all

19. I look to God for strength, support, and guidance.
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Quite a bit
    3 - Somewhat
    4 - Not at all

20. I feel God is punishing me for my sins or lack of spirituality.
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Quite a bit
    3 - Somewhat
    4 - Not at all

21. I wonder whether God has abandoned me.
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Quite a bit
    3 - Somewhat
    4 - Not at all

22. I try to make sense of the situation and decide what to do without relying on God.
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Quite a bit
    3 - Somewhat
    4 - Not at all

23. To what extend in your religion involved in understanding or dealing with stressful situations in any way?
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Quite a bit
    3 - Somewhat
    4 - Not at all

Religious Support

These questions are designed to find out how much help the people in your congregation would provide if you need it in the future.

24. If you were ill, how much would the people in your congregation help you out?
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Some
    3 - A little
    4 - None

25. If you had a problem or were faced with a difficult situation, how much comfort would the people in your congregation be willing to give you?
    1 - A great deal
    2 - Some
    3 - A little
    4 - None

Sometimes the contact we have with others is not always plelasant.

26. How often do the people in your congregation make toomany demands on you?
    1 - Very often
    2 - Fairly often
    3 - Once in a while
    4 - Never

27. How often are the people in your congreation critical of you and the things you do?
    1 - Very often
    2 - Fairly often
    3 - Once in a while
    4 - Never

Commitment

28. I try hard to carry my religious beliefs over into all my other dealings in life.
    1 - Strongly agree
    2 - Agree
    3 - Disagree
    4 - Strongly disagree

29. In an average week, how many hours do you spend in activities on behalf of your church or activities that you do for religious or spiritual reasons?

    _____

Organization Religiousness

30. How often do you go to religious services?
    1 - More than once a week
    2 - Every week or more often
    3 - Once or twice a month
    4 - Every month or so
    5 - Once or twice a year
    6 - Never

31. Besides religious services, how often do you take part in other activities at a place of worship?
    1 - More than once a week
    2 - Every week or more often
    3 - Once or twice a month
    4 - Every month or so
    5 - Once or twice a year
    6 - Never

Overall Self-Ranking

32. To what extent do you consider yourself a religious person?
    1 - Very religious
    2 - Moderately religious
    3 - Slightly religious
    4 - Not religious at all

33. To what extend do you consider yourself a spiritual person?
    1 - Very spiritual
    2 - Moderately spiritual
    3 - Slightly spiritual
    4 - Not spiritual at all

Religious & Sexual Identity Integration

1. What changes *(if any)* did you make in your religious participation in relation to your sexual identification? Circle all that apply.
    a. I now consider myself spiritual rather than religious
    b. I have reinterpreted previous religious teachings
    c. I changed my religious affiliation
    d. I left my previous religion and currently do not identify with any religion
    e. I did not change my religious beliefs but I stopped attending a religious institution.
    f. I remained in my religion and did not change my participation
    g. I remained in my religion and attempted to change existing attitudes of my religion
    h. Other: *(please specify)* _____

2. Have there been times where you have been able to be both openly religious and openly lesbian/gay/bisexual at the same time? *(Example: Times where you didn't have to conceal either identity to fully participate as both a religious and gay/lesbian/bisexual person.)*

Never
Sometimes
Always

If Yes: Please describe your experience being both religious and lesbian/gay/bisexual:

3. Overall, to what extent have you combined your sexual orientation and your religious beliefs?
    a. Not at all
    b. Somewhat
    c. Completely

Please Explain:

4. *If Yes to #3:*_ Which of the following factors aided in combining your religious and sexual identities? *(Circle all that apply)*

a. Family support
b. Support of friends involved in the church
c. Knowledge, biblical or religious readings
d. Clergy support
e. Therapist support
f. Affirming religious organization *(Ex. Dignity, Integrity, PFLAG, etc.)*

Please specify organization: _____

g. Accepting self & having a sense of completeness
h. Spiritual reasons *(work of God)*
h. Other *(please specify):* _____

Which of the following have you experienced in the last year? Answer by circling Y for YES or N for NO.

5. Rejection by my religious community due to my sexual orientation. Y N
6. Distance between me and my religious community due to my sexual orientation. Y N
7. Lack of support from my religious community due to my sexual orientation. Y N
8. Feeling like my religious community ignores my sexual orientation. Y N
9. Talking with some of the members of my religious community about my sexual orientation. Y N
10. Harassment within my religious community due to my sexual orientation. Y N

Appendix F:

Tests of Normality

To meet the assumptions of the statistical analyses used for the current study, all variables underwent tests of skewness and kurtosis. Performed transformations are outlined below. As noted, means and standard deviations presented in the tables are based on raw data while subsequent analyses utilized the transformed variables.

BMMRS

Tests of skewness and kurtosis indicated that the data were not normally distributed for the daily spiritual, private religious practices, religious commitment, organizational religiousness, religiousness, religious benefit, religious problems, positive and negative coping subscales. For each of these variables, the skewness and kurtosis statistics were greater than two times the standard error. A Log base 10 transformation was performed which completely eliminated or greatly reduced problems with skewness for each of the nine variables.

Religious Comfort and Religious Strain

Tests of skewness and kurtosis indicated that the data were not normally distributed for the religious strain, god negative and fear and guilt subscales. For each of these variables, the skewness and kurtosis statistics were greater than two times the standard error. A Log base 10 transformation was performed for each of the three non-normally distributed variables, which completely eliminated or greatly reduced problems with skewness for each of the three variables.

CESD

Tests of skewness and kurtosis indicated that the CESD data were not normally distributed as the skewness and kurtosis statistics were greater than two times the standard error. A Log base 10 transformation was performed which completely eliminated problems with skewness.

Measure of Gay Related Stressors

As some cells in the minority stress variables contained values less than 1, a constant was added to each participant subscale score on the Measure of Gay Related Stressors to allow transformations of skewed data (Osborne, 2002). Tests of skewness and kurtosis indicated that the data were not normally distributed for the family reactions to partner, pubic visibility, HIV/AIDS, misunderstanding and religion subscales. For each of these variables, the skewness and kurtosis statistics were greater than two times the standard error. A Log base 10 transformation was performed which completely eliminated or greatly reduced problems with skewness for the family reactions to partner, HIV/AIDS, and religion subscales. As the public visibility subscale was negatively skewed, the scores were reflected prior to the Log base 10 transformation and re-reflected post-transformation which completely eliminated problems with skewness (Osborne, 2002). No transformations proved beneficial for the misunderstanding subscale as it was extremely negatively skewed.

Appendix G:

Data Reduction

In order to reduce the number of religious variables to be included in subsequent analyses, a principle components factor analysis with Varimax rotation was conducted. **The beliefs, private religious practices, commitment, overall religiousness domains from the BMMRS were not included in the data reduction due to poor reliability, as noted previously.** The analysis yielded four factors with eigenvalues greater than 1.0 which were carried into subsequent analyses Table F1 presents the four factor loadings for each of the eighteen variables. The factor scores for each component yielded four new variables. Based on the content of the variables that loaded most heavily on each factor, these variables were termed positive and negative individual religiosity, and positive and negative communal religiosity.

The positive individual domain, with an eigenvalue of 6.4, accounted for 35.3% of the variance of the sample and included the highest factor loadings for the religious comfort, daily spiritual experiences, god positive, positive coping, faith positive, spirituality, and forgiveness subscales. Items within this domain reflect a positive, personal relationship with God in the cognitive, behavioral and affective domains. This variable is characterized by perceived benefits of faith, strength from one's relationship with God, acknowledgement of God's presence, partnership with God, and spirituality. The negative individual domain, with an eigenvalue of 3.5, accounted for 19.4% of the variance and was based primarily on the religious strain, god negative, fear and guilt, social negative and negative coping subscales. Items within this domain reflect a difficult personal relationship with god and others. This scale is characterized by a preoccupation

with one's own sin, feeling unforgiven and abandoned by God, reporting resentment towards the church community and an overall negative feeling towards God.

With an eigenvalue of 1.6, the positive communal domain accounted for 9.1% of the variance and was most heavily weighted by the variables organizational religiousness, religious benefit, religiousness, and family emphasis, which reflect experience within organized religion. Individual items within the scales include congregational support, organizational church attendance and self-ranking of religiousness. The negative communal domain had an eigenvalue of 1.2 and accounted for 6.8% of the variance. This domain included variables related to the religious problems and conflict. This scale reflects a common theme of difficult experiences within the organized church and community. Individual items include negative social interactions surrounding religion, feelings of being judged by congregational members and self-rating religious and sexual orientation conflict while coming out.

Table G1

Religious Variables Factor Loadings

	Positive individual	Negative individual	Positive communal	Negative communal
Religious comfort	.954	.046	.112	.007
Daily spiritual	.880	-.041	.258	.097
God positive	.870	.100	.116	.063
Positive coping	.864	.086	.124	.090
Faith positive	.830	-.024	.084	-.058
Spirituality	.666	.012	.059	.134
Forgiveness	.632	-.127	.348	.070
Religious strain	.033	.950	.026	.225
God negative	-.037	.876	.040	-.071
Fear and guilt	-.010	.828	.201	.219
Social negative	.170	.611	-.167	.498
Negative coping	-.048	.533	.469	-.414
Organizational	.327	.090	.825	.080
Religious benefit	.261	-.012	.803	.104
Religiousness	.505	.077	.566	.163
Family emphasis	-.006	.200	.503	.435
Religious problems	.135	.344	.375	.494
Religious conflict	.099	.101	.180	.776